



## 7/8U Fairfield Sports Association Softball Rulebook

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### 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 idea behind this age group and the design of this program is to positively encourage our girls to have a true enjoyment for the sport and become the best athlete they can be.

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### Code of Conduct

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

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### 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.
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## 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.

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## Game Limits and Durations

- **Coach Pitch:** 5 innings or 60 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 games will end 10 minutes after the designated time limit and revert to the last completed inning.*
  - **Rain Outs:** To be considered a full game, both teams must complete 2 full innings or 35 minutes of play.
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## Game Balls

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

- One (1) umpire will be positioned at the home plate area for regular and tournament games.
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## Coaches

1. The **Head Coach** is the only person allowed to speak to the umpire.

2. Only **3 coaches per team** are allowed on the playing field at any one time during a game.
  3. Offensive base coaches (1st and 3rd) must remain in the coach's area at 15 feet down the base line in foul territory.
  4. Defensive coaches should be positioned in foul territory and in the grass (behind 1st and 3rd). One defensive coach should be near the backstop to shag balls.
  5. **1 time-out per half inning.**
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## Run Limits

- **5 runs per inning.**
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## 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.
  - 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.
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## Offensive Lineup

- The batting lineup may consist of a **minimum of eight (8) players.**
  - All players present must be in the batting order
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## 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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## Pitching Coach

- The pitching coach must be an adult at least **18 years of age.**

- If the pitching coach is the head coach, they may designate someone else to communicate with the umpires while they are pitching.
  - The pitching coach must have **one foot on the rubber** prior to the pitch.
  - 8U - The pitcher must pitch from the 35-foot rubber.
  - 7U - The pitcher must pitch from the 30-foot rubber.
  - The pitching coach shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position.
  - The pitching coach must retrieve the bat after contact is made, and the ball is in play.
  - The pitching coach must position themselves in foul territory so as not to obstruct the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit.
  - **Interference:** If, in the umpire's judgment, a coach interferes unintentionally with the batted ball or defensive play, the ball will be declared dead. Runners will go back to the respective base and the pitch will not count. If interference is intentional, the batter is out, and runners cannot advance.
  - **The coach pitcher may only talk to the batter up until the coach pitcher becomes set on the rubber.**
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## Batting

- The batter will receive five pitches or three swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. *Each pitch counts as one of the five, even if the batter does not swing.*
- If the batter fouls off the fifth pitch (not bunted), they will remain at bat as long as they continue to foul off pitches.
- The batter is out on a third strike, whether caught or uncaught.
- Base on Balls (walks) are not allowed. Hitters hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base.
- Bunting is NOT allowed.
- The infield fly rule is not in effect. The ball remains "live," with all runners in jeopardy of being put out or advancing.
- A runner may not leave a base until the pitch reaches home plate.  
*Penalty:* The ball is dead, a "no pitch" is declared, and the runner is out.
- A runner cannot steal a base.
- After any play involving a non-batted ball, the ball is dead, all advances are nullified, and runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- Time will be called when all three criteria have been met.
  - An **infield** player has possession of the ball in the infield. An Outfielder running the ball into the infield does not count.
  - The lead runner has stopped or hesitated from advancing.
  - There is no imminent defensive play being made.

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## Overthrow Rule

- **Applies to first base.** On a ball hit to the infield and then thrown to first base, the runner may advance no further than **second base** on an overthrow to first base.
  - **Applies to second base.** Only on a force play, if the ball is thrown to second base, the runner on first may advance no further than **third base** and the batter may advance no further than **second base**.
    - **This rule is intended for plays from infielders.** A play in which a ball is thrown from the outfield, regardless of an infielder or outfielder throwing, to second base will be considered live until the umpire calls time.
  - If the runner attempts to advance beyond second or third base, they do so at their own risk. If they are put out, they are out. If they make it safely to the next base, they will be returned to second or third base after the play stops.
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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. Score will be recorded as 11-0.
- **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 must approve.**
- **No player can play the same position for more than 3 innings in a game.**

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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 a 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**

### 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 4<sup>th</sup>. 6 or more runs after the top half of the 5<sup>th</sup>. The home team has 11 or more runs after the bottom half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6 or more runs after the bottom half of the 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - **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

1. **Infield Warmups:**
    - There will be **no infield warmups** prior to the game.
  2. **Batting Cage Access:**
    - As part of pre-game preparations, teams will have access to the batting cages one hour before game time.
    - The visiting team will have access to the batting cages for the first 25 minutes, followed by the home team who will have the remaining 25 minutes.
  3. **Questions and Concerns:**
    - Any questions or concerns regarding the rules or procedures must be addressed with the umpire during the pre-game meeting at home plate, which will occur prior to the start of the game.
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