

Aitkin Youth Fastpitch

Updated 4/26/2022
5th – 6th grades

Majors

*Adapted to include Northern Lakes Summer League Rules and Regulations.
Refer to their document for a comprehensive list of rules.*

As usual our first emphasis is on having **fun**. Always remember our **AYF Mission Statement**: foster love of the game, stress sportsmanship, teach fundamentals, and encourage community involvement. Nothing in here about your team going undefeated.

We have amateur umpires with varying levels of experience, and we continually remind our players, coaches, and fans to demonstrate awesome sportsmanship.

General Game Rules:

- Good sportsmanship while creating a **supportive positive environment** for girls to have fun and learn softball is priority number one.
- Players should all arrive a minimum of **30 minutes prior** to the start of game time.
- No minimum players necessary to play.
- Both team coaches should **meet with the umpire** prior to the start of the game to discuss rules and special considerations.
 - **See notes in pitching section*
- **Bench coach's** job is to help keep the kids focused and ready for their spot in the order. Everyone should know where they are going out on defense and should huddle together before hustling out together on defense.
- Remind the girls to **cheer** for each other. Give them specific things to cheer about. Call out teammates when they do something good and make a point to recognize them.
- Coaches/parents/players **meet afterward** to share positive statements, recognition of players, and treats.

Game Timing:

- The games will be **5 innings** or 90 minutes.
 - **No new inning** will be can start after 1 hour 10 minutes of play.
- **Maximum of 5 runs** allowed per inning except no run limit in the final inning.
- 10 run rule applies **after** 4 innings

Equipment/apparel:

- **Helmets** must be always worn for hitter, on-deck hitter, in-the-hole hitter, and base runners.
- All players should wear a **softball/baseball pant** or some other long pants.
 - Note: please no shorts from a safety standpoint and as you need pants to wear the catcher's gear.
- **Rubber spikes only**. No metal cleats. No tennis shoes as they are too slippery.
- **Infield masks** shall be worn by all players in the infield and will be supplied.
- **Catchers' equipment** must be worn and will be supplied by the league.
- Each girl needs to bring their own **glove**. We have few extras.
- It is acceptable to use your own equipment, however, please mark them in somehow so they don't end up donated to AYF.

Equal Play Time Policy:

- All players listed on the game roster will bat, regardless of defensive play time. Field time and bench time should be as equal as possible.
- All players must be given the opportunity to play the various positions on the field. Players must rotate positions. No player can play the entire game in the outfield or infield or in one position, must rotate between both.
 - **Note: Safety is the first priority in determining where a player is placed in the field.*

Offense:

- The batting order, with the team roster, will remain the same throughout the game.
- Thrown bats: First team offense = warning, Second team offense = out
- **Bunting** is allowed.
- Players are **strongly encouraged to slide** if a play is being made at the base they are advancing to. Coaches should make every attempt to teach proper sliding techniques.
 - If there is a collision at the bag due to runner purposely not sliding, runner will be called out and ejected from the game
- **No stealing**
 - Player may not advance on a pitcher/catcher exchange or pitched passed ball.
 - No runner can advance on a catcher - pitcher exchange following a pitch.

- Runners may not round first and advance to second on a walk
- No leading off, runner may not leave base until the ball is hit
- **No advance** to 1st base on a dropped 3rd strike.
- Courtesy runners may be substituted for catchers or pitchers who reach base in order to speed up the game

Defense:

- There will be a maximum of 4 outfielders and 6th infielders allowed on the field per inning. **Outfielders** need to play in the grass, not the infield.
- Overthrows:
 - If a thrown ball goes outside the field of play, the runner(s) can advance ONE base in addition to the base they were going to
 - If a thrown ball stays within the field of play, it is considered a fair ball

Pitching:

- Player pitch from **40 ft**.
- The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- Incoming pitcher will be allowed 10 throws to warm up
- A play is considered dead when the pitcher has the ball (time will be called).

AYF Goals (Optional Rules):

Have a discussion with the opposing coaches before the to see if both teams want to play this way.

- **Coach takes** over the count if **ball 4** is thrown. The umpire will still call balls and strikes with the coach pitching so that the hitter is not forced to swing at an accidental bad pitch.

Example:

Count: 3-1 then Pitcher throws ball 4. Coach comes in with count:

3-1 intact.

1st coach pitch – strike, no swing. Count: 3-2

2nd coach pitch – ball, no swing. Count: 3-2

3rd coach pitch – foul ball, Count: 3-2

4th coach pitch – swing and miss, Strike 3, Out.

- *The coach should make every attempt to deliver a flat pitch from as close to 40 ft as they can. Moving closer to 35 ft will be allowed if necessary to deliver a hittable pitch.*
- *First base will not be awarded if **hit by pitch**. Instead, coach will immediately come in to pitch and the hitter will be given a fresh count (no strikes).*
 - *After 3 hit batters by one pitcher, any future hit batters will be given the option to immediately take first base. They can decline this option and hit off coach if they wish.*

Umpires:

- No protests are allowed - the **umpire's decision is final**.
- Every attempt will be made to have an umpire for games.
 - The umpire is the responsibility of the home team.
 - If **no umpire** is available, then head coaches will ump from behind the pitcher.
- Give constant reminders to everyone that they are to **only** treat the umpires with **respect and gratitude**.
 - As adults we will need to model the behavior for our athletes.
 - Anyone mistreating any umpire will be **warned** 1st and then asked to leave.
 - Failure to comply may result in the forfeit of the game.
 - We are confident this won't be an issue.

Weather:

- In the case of inclement weather, the **head coaches** (or Pequot Lakes the Youth Sports Coordinator) **will be responsible** for the decision to play or not based on field conditions and weather forecast as well as communicating with each other and their teams.
 - If there is a question about a game, parents should check with coach prior to leaving to play.
- The decision to cancel will be made by **4:30 p.m. on a game day** or **1.5 hours before** practice.
- PL Coordinator will arrange for make-up dates if available.

Most Important Rules:

- Keep the **energy high and positive**.
- Always **end the night** with positive statements, recognition of players, and treats.
- If the girls are having fun, they'll **come back** for more!