



Harker Heights
Parks & Recreation
Creating Community



Youth Softball By-Laws

Revised 3/20/2023

Article I – Playing Rules

1. All areas not specifically covered in these by-laws are subject to the playing rules of USA Softball and USSSA Softball.
2. Any matter not covered in these articles and rules shall be left to the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department.
3. The rules as set forth in this outline shall be strictly adhered to and supersede rules from all other sources in the specific areas with which they are concerned.
4. The Parks and Recreation Department shall have the power to schedule or re-schedule any game necessary to complete the season.
5. Format of play:
 - 8U (7 & 8) Coach Pitch
 - 10U (9 & 10) Player Pitch
 - 12U (11 & 12) Player Pitch
 - 15U (13 & 14 & 15U) Player Pitch
6. Practice will be assigned to each team/coach at the coaches meeting per division.
7. Only players, the allotted coaches, and 1 bat boy or girl will be allowed in the dugouts.
8. Failure to have at least one coach will result in forfeiture of game at which the violation occurred.

Article II – Team Formation

1. The sizes of the teams will be set by the Parks and Recreation Department based on registrants and head coaches.
2. Teams in 8U Coach Pitch (7-8), 10U (9-10), 12U (11-12), and 15U (13-15) divisions will be selected by draft.
3. Teams can guarantee 3 players which must include the head coach's child/children.
4. All players are encouraged to take part in the player ability assessment.
5. Any player that is not present at the player ability assessment when offered will be classified as Unassessed (U).
6. Draft order will be randomly determined.
7. Selection of players will be made using the snake draft format.

8. Each team will select a player in the first round of the draft with each team's protected players being drafted beginning in Round 2.
 - a. Siblings of players chosen will automatically fill the next available draft position.
 - b. Returning players will automatically be chosen starting in the fifth round and beyond until all returners for that particular team are chosen.
9. A team may choose to pick a U out of the hat for the draft pick, provided that round's pick is not already taken by a protected player, returning player, or a sibling. Once all players that were assessed have been chosen, teams will automatically draw out of the hat until all players are chosen.
10. Player ability grades will be assigned 1 – 5.
11. No player trades or swaps will be permitted or approved.
12. All changes conducted will be completed and approved by the affiliate staff.

Article III – Season

1. Teams will receive a minimum of 10-games
2. Non-regular season games may be scheduled between other teams but will not count towards the regular season.
3. Regular season games may end in a tie.
4. Ties at the end of regular season will be determined by the following criteria:
 - a. Head to Head
 - b. Head to Head Differential
 - c. Runs Allowed
 - d. Runs Scored
 - e. Run Differential
 - f. Lowest Number of Forfeits
 - g. Coin Flip
5. Awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd where possible will receive end of season awards.
6. Tournaments that are hosted by HHPRD and KPR cooperatively will have locations to be determined by Parks and Recreation personnel.

Article IV – Playing Time

1. An official game shall consist of:

8U	5 innings or 60 minutes
10U	6 innings or 70 minutes
12U	6 innings or 80 minutes
15U	7 innings or 85 minutes
2. Game time will start when the umpire signals the clock to start or at the first warm up pitch.
3. Line-ups must be turned into the scorekeeper 10 minutes prior to game time with first and last names of players, numbers, and batting order. Managers failing to comply with this rule makes his game subject to forfeiture at the discretion of the umpire.
4. Games may be started early whenever the occasion arises, but both managers must consent.
5. No infield practice will be permitted before or between games.
6. Teams must have 8 players to start and finish each game. A team who wins due to forfeit must also have at least 8 players present at the time of forfeit. If neither team can field 8 players, the

game will be a double forfeit, the game will not be played later, and each team will receive a loss.

7. If the first game of the evening is a forfeit, the affected team may utilize the field for a practice game until the next game is ready to begin. If the last game of the evening is a forfeit, the complex will be closed, and all play discontinued.
8. Play must be stopped for injured players to allow coaches and league officials to check the player.
9. A game will be considered completed is play is discontinued at:
8U: 3 innings or 30 minutes
10U: 4 innings or 35 minutes
12U 4 innings or 40 minutes
15U: 5 innings or 45 minutes
10. A maximum of five (5) runs will be allowed per inning for 8U. Run rule at 15 after 3 innings.
11. A maximum of six (6) runs will be allowed per inning for 10U. Run rule at 15 after 3 innings and 8 after 4.
12. A maximum of seven (7) runs will be allowed per inning for 12U. Run rule at 15 after 3 innings and 8 after 4.
13. A maximum of seven (7) runs will be allowed per inning for 15U. Run rule at 15 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 and 8 after 5.
14. The league will consist of the "Drop Dead Game Time Rule" At the end of an official game, If the home team is ahead, they win. If the visitor is ahead at that time, the bottom of the inning will be completed if the home to has a chance to tie or win the game.

Article V – Participation Rule for Recreational Leagues

1. Players and parents are encouraged to attend practices and coaches are encouraged to play all kids above the minimum required playing time. As a recreational league, the most important point of focus should be getting all kids to play.
2. The following applies to each player that has made 1/2 of all scheduled team practices within the last 7 days and who is on the field in uniform 5 minutes prior to the start of the game. Coaches are encouraged to play kids even if they do not meet the play time requirement.
3. Each player is required to play at minimum 3 defensive outs and have 1 at bat per game.
4. Non-compliance with the players' participation rule could result in forfeiture of the game up to dismissal of coach from the league, etc.
5. Injury Exception: The coach must notify Parks and Recreation department staff prior to game of injured player for injuries that prevent the player from completing the required playing time allotment. The injury may be questioned by the affiliate staff to the player's parent(s) about the status of returning to the game. This decision does not require the coach's approval. If it is determined that this is a strategy or influence by the coach, the player will not receive credit for participation time and could result in a forfeiture of game.

6. The coach is required to notify Parks and Recreation staff, the umpire and opposing team coach of any player that is not meeting the participation requirement of the game due to discipline or any other issue.
7. If teams have players not meeting the practice requirement and/or missing games, they must notify the affiliate staff. If the affiliate staff is not officially notified, the player will be expected to play as stated above. Player participation issues will be handled on a case by case basis to determine player participation eligibility.

Article VI – Equipment & Uniforms

1. All players on each team must wear the uniforms provided by the Department. Shirts must be tucked in and hats must be worn forwards.
2. Equipment will be provided by the affiliate department to each team. All equipment must be worn properly according the manufactures standards.
3. Players at bat and all base runner must wear a protective helmet with ear protection for both ears.
4. Parents must provide the game pants/sock, cleats, and any other equipment needed.
5. Players who wear any type of glasses on the field must have a retainer strap.
6. Molded cleats are permitted. Metal or spike cleats are not permitted.
7. No jewelry, hard cosmetic, or decorative items are permitted or may be worn at any time during the game unless medical alerts.
8. Wristbands and headbands must be worn on the wrist or on the head above the ears.
9. Referees may ban any equipment that they deem as unsafe or illegal.

Article VII – Protest

1. Protest can be filed for rules interpretations. Protest cannot be filed for judgement calls. Arguing balls and strikes may result in ejection at the umpire's discretion.
2. Protests must be made to the umpire and official scorekeeper at that time, and then a written protest filed with the affiliate department within 24 hours business hours. This formal notification must be done by the Head Coach that is protesting the game. The opponent's Head Coach will be notified by the umpire at the time of the protest.
3. When a protest is made, the game must be stopped and a league administrator must be notified so that the situation may be resolved at that time, if possible.
4. If an official protest is still needed, it will be recorded in the book and affiliate staff will review the situation and decide in a timely manner.
5. If needed, the game may be restarted later and time from the moment of the protest. Teams may sub during a restart for players that are not their if they have not already subbed for a different player during the game.
6. If an official protest is to be appealed, it may be brought before Parks and Recreation staff.

Article VIII – Division Specific Rules

A. 8U Coach Pitch

1. Field Dimensions are 60' baselines and 30' pitching distance.
2. Teams in this division will play 3 outs per inning. The entire team will bat.
3. Dropped 3rd strike is not in effect.
4. No stealing is allowed.
5. If a ball is overthrown in attempt to make a play at a base, the play will be called a "dead ball" and every runner will be awarded one additional base only. Dead balls will be called at the umpire's discretion.
 - a. Ex) If the play is made at first base, the runner will be awarded second base.
 - b. An "overthrow" is defined as a ball thrown out of reach of the intended target.
6. No fake tags. First offense will be a warning. Second offense will result in the base runner being awarded the next base.
7. Courtesy Runners may be used for catchers. Coaches must notify the umpire and scorekeeper that a courtesy runner will be utilized. The same runner may courtesy run for more than one player per inning, but the courtesy runner must be an eligible substitute. The same courtesy runner may only courtesy run twice in the same inning. Courtesy runners may not be a player that has been in the 9-player position lineup.
8. Each player may enter and be substituted defensively, but the batting order must remain the same. If a player is substituted twice, they may no longer play in the current game.
9. There is no intentional walk.
10. There are no bunts allowed. When a bunt is attempted, the ball is dead, the batter is out, no runner may advance. What constitutes a bunt is up to the umpire's discretion.
11. The infield fly rule is not in affect.
12. A batter will receive 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever occurs first.
13. If the 5th pitch or subsequent pitch is hit foul, the batter will remain at bat if they continue to foul the pitch.
14. The defensive player listed as pitcher shall be at a distance no further than 4 feet beside or behind the pitching rubber until the ball has been hit.
15. Pitching MUST be an underhand motion.
16. Coaches must stand while pitching but must keep at least one foot on the rubber.
17. The Pitching Coach shall not coach while in the pitching position, either verbally or physically.
18. Only approved coaches may pitch.
19. Once the ball has been hit, the Pitching Coach must position themselves as not to be an obstruction to the defensive team on any play at all.
20. If the batted ball hits the Pitching Coach, the umpire will judge if the Pitching Coach made a legitimate attempt to get out of the way.
 - a. If the umpire rules the Pitching Coach did try to get out of the way all runners advance one base.
 - b. If the umpire rules the Pitching Coach did not try to get out of the way the batter is declared out and no runner shall advance.

B. 10U Softball

1. Field Dimensions: 60' baselines and 35' pitching distance.
2. If a batter strikes out and the ball is missed, the batter is out and cannot advance to first base. The ball remains live.
3. STEALING is permitted. (NO stealing home even if wild pitch occurs)
4. Infield fly rule IS in effect.
5. No fake tags. First offense will be a warning. Second offense will result in the base runner being awarded the next base.
6. Courtesy runners may be used for pitchers and catchers. Coaches must notify the umpire and scorekeeper that a courtesy runner will be utilized. The same runner may courtesy run for more than one player per inning, but the courtesy runner must be an eligible substitute. The same courtesy runner may only courtesy run twice in the same inning. Courtesy runners may not be a player that has been in the 9-player position lineup.
7. Each player may enter and be substituted defensively, but the batting order must remain the same. If a player is substituted twice, they may no longer play in the current game. Pitchers may not return to the mound once removed.
8. A coach may visit the pitcher twice in one inning, the third visit requires the pitcher to be removed.
 - a. The coach may not make a third visit while the same batter is at bat.
 - b. Once a pitcher is removed a visit will not be charged to the new pitcher.
 - c. Evaluating a player's playing condition and/or potential injury will not be ruled as a pitcher's visit. The coach must relay that to the umpire, and the umpire will monitor the visit.
 - d. A coach who is granted a time out to talk to any defensive player will be charged with a visit to the pitcher.

C. 12U Softball

1. Field Dimensions: 70' baselines and 40' pitching distance.
2. If a third strike is called and the catcher does not catch the ball, the batter may attempt to advance to first base so long as first base is not occupied.
3. Balks are in effect.
4. Infield fly rule IS in effect.
5. Courtesy runners may be used for pitchers and catchers. Coaches must notify the umpire and scorekeeper that a courtesy runner will be utilized. The same runner may courtesy run for more than one player per inning, but the courtesy runner must be an eligible substitute. the same courtesy runner may only courtesy run twice in the same inning. Courtesy runners may not be a player that has been in the 9-player position lineup.
6. Each player may enter and be substituted defensively, but the batting order must remain the same. If a player is substituted twice, they may no longer play in the current game. Pitchers may not return to the mound once removed.
7. A coach may visit the pitcher twice in one inning, the third visit requires the pitcher to be removed.
 - e. The coach may not make a third visit while the same batter is at bat.
 - f. Once a pitcher is removed a visit will not be charged to the new pitcher.
 - g. Evaluating a player's playing condition and/or potential injury will not be ruled as a pitcher's visit. The coach must relay that to the umpire, and the umpire will monitor the visit.
 - h. A coach who is granted a time out to talk to any defensive player will be charged with a visit to the pitcher.

D. 15U Softball

1. Field Dimensions: 60' baselines and 43' pitching distance.
2. If a third strike is called and the catcher does not catch the ball, the batter may attempt to advance to first base so long as first base is not occupied.
3. Infield fly rule IS in effect.
4. No fake tags. First offense will be a warning. Second offense will result in the base runner being awarded the next base.
5. Courtesy runners may be used for pitchers and catchers. Coaches must notify the umpire and scorekeeper that a courtesy runner will be utilized. The same runner may courtesy run for more than one player per inning, but the courtesy runner must be an eligible substitute. the same courtesy runner may only courtesy run twice in the same inning. Courtesy runners may not be a player that has been in the 9-player position lineup.
6. Each player may enter and be substituted defensively, but the batting order must remain the same. If a player is substituted twice, they may no longer play in the current game. Pitchers may not return to the mound once removed.
9. A coach may visit the pitcher twice in one inning, the third visit requires the pitcher to be removed.
 - a. The coach may not make a third visit while the same batter is at bat.
 - b. Once a pitcher is removed a visit will not be charged to the new pitcher.
 - c. Evaluating a player's playing condition and/or potential injury will not be ruled as a pitcher's visit. The coach must relay that to the umpire, and the umpire will monitor the visit.
 - d. A coach who is granted a time out to talk to any defensive player will be charged with a visit to the pitcher.

Article IX – Sportsmanship

1. All players, coaches, and fans must adhere to high standards of good sportsmanship and fair play during games.
 2. No heckling or taunting of opposing players will be allowed by players, parents, or coaches. Unsportsmanlike behavior may result in forfeiture of games.
 3. Excessive noise being created by base runners, either verbal or physical means, will not be tolerated. Each individual player will be given one warning from the umpire and any subsequent activity can result in removal from the game.
 4. Players are permitted and encouraged to shout or chant encouragement to their own teammates while on the field or on the bench; however, players are not permitted to make comments and/or chant against opposing players and teams.
 5. Any player, coach, parent, or sponsor ejected from any league game must leave the complex and may not return until contacted by affiliate staff.
 6. Any player, coach, or sponsor ejected from any league game may receive such as game suspensions or possible removal from league for unsportsmanlike conduct.
 7. Any suspension/ejection that occurs will carry over into the next season play.
1. Coaches and assistant(s) shall not question any judgment call made by the official(s) during or after the game.
 2. The head coach shall be responsible for the conduct of his/her team, assistant coach(s), and spectators.

It is the coaches' responsibility to know the rules or ask questions if unclear.

Coaches Discipline Guide

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Directed Toward</i>	<i>Minimum Action</i>	<i>Maximum Action</i>
<i>Tobacco use (chewing, smoking)</i>	<i>during games, practices or league functions</i>	<i>Verbal</i>	<i>Ejection(s)</i>
<i>Alcohol, illegal substances</i>	<i>during games, practices or league functions</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game</i>	<i>Suspension, suspension up to 1 calendar year</i>
<i>Allowing a player to play or participate while knowing of an injury or concussion</i>	<i>During game or practices</i>	<i>Game ejection</i>	<i>Season suspension</i>
<i>Foul or abusive language directed at</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Verbal warning and/or ejection for remainder of game</i>	<i>Game suspension</i>
<i>Continued foul or abusive language. Blatant disregard for staff and officials</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Current game suspension</i>	<i>Multiple game suspension</i>
<i>Encouraging foul language, threatening language, unsportsmanlike behavior, encouraging or telling players to have that kind of behavior</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Current game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension</i>
<i>Threat of physical abuse, assault, threat of bodily injury of any kind</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game and next game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension to lifetime suspension. Level of threat will determine length of suspension</i>
<i>Fighting or physical assault of any kind</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game and next game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension to lifetime suspension. Level of threat will determine length of suspension</i>
<i>Playing an illegal player (see definition #5)</i>		<i>Ejection of next game and forfeiture of current game</i>	<i>Multiple game suspension to league removal</i>
<i>Pulling children off a field for any reason other than weather.</i>		<i>Suspension for next three games</i>	<i>League removal</i>

Parents Discipline Guide

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Directed Toward</i>	<i>Minimum Action</i>	<i>Maximum Action</i>
<i>Alcohol, illegal substances</i>	<i>during games, practices or league functions</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game</i>	<i>suspension, suspension up to 1 calendar year</i>
<i>Foul or abusive language directed at</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Verbal warning and/or ejection for remainder of game</i>	<i>Game suspension</i>
<i>Continued foul or abusive language. Blatant disregard for staff and officials</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>current game suspension</i>	<i>multiple game suspension</i>
<i>Encouraging foul language, threatening language, unsportsmanlike behavior, encouraging or telling players to have that kind of behavior</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>current game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension</i>
<i>Threat of physical abuse, assault, threat of bodily injury of any kind</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game and next game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension to lifetime suspension. Level of threat will determine length of suspension</i>
<i>Fighting or physical assault of any kind</i>	<i>Player, Coach, official, spectator or staff</i>	<i>Ejection for remainder of game and next game suspension</i>	<i>Season suspension to lifetime suspension, possible removal of child. Level of threat will determine length of suspension</i>