

2011 South Plains Girls Fast Pitch Softball League Rules

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Introduction:

This season is dedicated to the child and future ball player. Please look upon yourselves as teachers. It is alright to want to win, but let's not promote winning at all costs. Remember, these children will be looking to us for instruction and guidance. Teach them the fundamentals and they will remember you for years to come.

General League Rules:

****Any rule not addressed here shall follow the rules of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA).**

The Game:

A regulation game shall be:

- 5 innings or 55 minutes for Pixie (6-U)
- 5 innings or 1 hour 20 minutes for Machine Pitch (8-U)
- 6 innings or 1 hour 20 minutes for 10-U
- 7 innings or 1 hour 20 minutes for 12-U
- 7 innings or 1 hour 20 minutes for 14-U
- 7 innings or 1 hour 20 minutes for 18-U

whichever comes first. One (1) extra inning shall be played in case of a tie using International Tiebreaker Rules. If the game is still tied, it shall be recorded as such.

An inning begins with the 3rd out from the previous inning or when a team has reached its limited number of runs.

A team must have 6 players within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time to start the game or it is considered a forfeit."

Dress:

1. Conventional playing clothes and league issued jersey only.
2. Pants or shorts, that must be alike in color, can be selected as a team preference.
3. Machine Pitch (8-U), 10-U, 12-U, 14-U and 18-U must wear batting helmets with face-guard and chinstraps.
4. Pixie (6-U) must wear batting helmets with chinstraps. Face-guards are optional, but are strongly encouraged. The pitcher's helmets must have both chinstrap and face-guard.

Teams/Rosters:

Rosters of all teams shall consist of at least 10 players. Each team will have a Head Coach, a minimum of two(2) Assistant Coaches, and a Female chaperone. All Coaches will be listed on the official SPGF team roster.

Each Manager will exchange rosters prior to the game.

Each team will bat the lineup.

Defense shall consist of 10 players for Pixie (6-U), Machine Pitch (8-U) and 10-U. The tenth player shall play as a Rover and must start on the grass, but may play in once the ball is pitched.

Defense shall consist of 9 players for 12-U, 14-U and 18-U.

Managers shall play any combination of players per inning on defense. Players may only be a sub on the bench for 1 inning at a time and must play at least every other inning.

NO FIELDER, OTHER THAN THE CATCHER, MAY SET UP CLOSER THAN 35FT TO HOME PLATE BEFORE THE BALL IS HIT.

Substitutions shall only be allowed between innings except in the case of injury or ejection. There are no automatic outs for shortage of players.

Pitchers/Pitching Rules:

1. Pixie(6-U) and Machine Pitch(8-U) A player may not play the position of pitcher more than two (2) innings in a single game.
2. 10-U and 12-U are limited to any 9 outs in a game per pitcher
3. 14-U and 18-U shall have open pitching.

Pitchers may use the pitching motions allowed in ASA Rules

Refer to the ASA Rule book on rules dealing with pitching motion. Crow hop, leaping and jumping are not allowed

Additional Pitching info:

1. Each coach will be allowed three (3) conferences per pitcher per game.
2. A pitching change without a conference counts as a trip.
3. A coach is allowed one conference per pitcher per inning.
4. A defensive conference is a trip on the pitcher.
5. A pitcher can only be charged a maximum of 3 outs per inning.
6. If a team reaches the run limit in an inning, the pitcher on the mound shall be credited with the outs not actually earned.

Batting:

Teams shall bat their entire lineup.

The order cannot change during the game.

Late arrivals shall be added to the bottom of the roster no matter when they arrive.

If a player is injured and unable to take her turn at bat, she shall be scratched for the remainder of the game.

An injured player may return as long as they have not missed their turn in the lineup. There is no automatic outs for shortage of players

Defense:

Players may be moved from position to position on the field during an inning without causing delay to the game.

Coaches on the field:

Offensive team may have two (2) coaches on the field at a time.

Exception:

1. Pixie (6-U) and MP (8-U) have 3 coaches (1st Base, 3rd Base and Pitching Coach)
2. 10U pitching coach when there is a bases loaded 4th ball walk

Defensive team may have one (1) coach on the field within 3 feet of the dugout.

Run limits:

Pixie (6-U) – 5 runs per inning max

Machine Pitch (8-U) – 5 runs per inning max

10U – 5 runs per inning max

12U – 7 runs per inning max

14U – 7 runs per inning max

18U – 7 runs per inning max

Only in the 5th inning, a maximum of 15 runs shall be the rule.

Weather:

If inclement weather is imminent or any lightning is seen or heard, an umpire may call the game due to weather. If in the coaches' opinion, the weather becomes too bad or unsafe, they can by mutual agreement inform the umpire that the game is called because of weather. A game called because weather, with regulation time still available, will be continued from the stopping point and finished the next available day. Three (3) complete innings or 45 minutes of play is considered an official game. If time limit applies, the score reverts back to the last completed inning.

Pulling Up Players:

If a team is short players to field a full team (9 players), they may pull up no more than three (3) girls from the next lower division to fill spots in order to play the game. All pulled up players shall wear their own league uniform and bat last in the lineup. They cannot pitch! Any late arriving player shall replace a pulled up player in the lineup. Violation of this policy is forfeiture of the game.

A team must have 6 players within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time to start the game or it is considered a forfeit.

Coach Behavior:

1. No coach will charge out of the dugout when questioning an umpire's decision. An act of this nature will result in immediate ejection from the game and the ballpark. Any action resulting in a warning or ejection from the game will result in a meeting with the board or the appropriate committee.
2. No team shall station a coach, player or parent down the opposite baseline to give instructions to their players. This does not include the base coach.
3. **Coaches will be responsible for the actions of their parents.**
4. Unsportsmanlike conduct by any coach that is directed at the opposing players, coaches or parents shall not be permitted. The same can be said for umpires and commissioners.
5. Alcohol shall not be permitted at the ball fields in any form. This includes on the breath of any person while at the game. Any person in violation of any rule of the league is subject to a hearing by the board for possible disciplinary action.

Player Behavior:

Players may chant or shout positive things to their teammates. Negative or unsportsmanlike comments directed to opposing players, coaches or fellow teammates shall not be tolerated. Dismissal from the game may result and an appearance in front of the board for further action may be taken.

Spectator Behavior:

Spectators should act in a sportsmanlike manner. Anyone attending the game is subject to the alcohol rules of the league and violation of this rule will be removal from the park area. Please promote a positive environment for the girls of this league. Any spectator in violation of this policy may be asked to leave the field area. Failure to do so could result in the game being stopped and a forfeit issued.

Age Division Restriction for players:

A player must play at least one year in their designated age group before attempting to play up a division.

Special League Rules for 10U

Walking in a run:

During any game, if the bases are loaded and the batter receives a 4-ball walk:

- A. The ball shall be considered a live ball until the umpire has called time after the ball is under the control of the pitcher inside the pitching circle.
- B. A "Live" ball will give the runner on 3rd an option to advance to home with the possibility of being tagged out. If the runner on 3rd advances and scores or gets tagged out, then the bases are no longer loaded the batter may advance to 1st base and the other runners may advance one(1) base without the possibility of being tagged out.
- C. If the 3rd base runner does not advance, the batter will remain at the plate. A pitching coach on the roster will pitch to finish to the batter's turn at bat. The remaining strikes left for the batter will be determined by how many strikes the batter had when she received the 4th ball from the original girl pitcher. ALL coach pitches shall count as strikes. Any foul ball will count as strike. Once 3 strikes have been reached the batter is out.
- D. Please refer to the rules from machine pitch if the coach pitcher is hit by a batted ball or interferes with a play.

A batter hit by pitch from the original girl pitcher shall be awarded 1st base and the other base runners will advance.

Stealing:

Runners may NOT steal any base while the "pitching coach" is in play.

Dropped 3rd Strike:

Dropped third strike rule IS in effect for 10-U.

Infield Fly Rule:

Infield Fly Rule IS in effect for 10-U

Special League Rules for Machine Pitch (8U)

Defensive Play:

A defensive player may not intentionally roll or run the ball to a base that is not a normal play. The ball may not intentionally be rolled or run to the pitcher. If, in the judgment of the umpire, any violation has occurred, this shall result in the base runners given an extra base.

A defensive player will not be allowed to run down any base runner. The defensive player must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a tag would be the normal play on a base runner, a defensive player would not have to throw the ball. NORMAL PLAY IS THE KEY!

Dropped 3rd Strike:

Dropped third strike rule is **NOT** in effect for MP (8-U).

Infield Fly Rule:

Infield Fly Rule is **NOT** in effect for MP (8-U)

Pitchers:

1. The pitchers circle will be the same as 10-U.
2. The ball will be pitched from a machine. It will be the responsibility of the offensive team to supply an adult to run the machine.
3. The pitcher must have one foot inside the circle and be no closer to home plate than the pitching machine, (i.e. the 35 ft rubber) until the ball is hit.
4. When the ball is thrown back to the pitcher and the pitcher has control of the ball with both feet inside the circle, the ball is considered dead at this point and play should be stopped by the umpire. If the pitcher runs through the circle with control of the ball after the initial play on the ball, the play will be called dead.
5. The pitcher will not be allowed to run down the base runner to any base except home. The pitcher must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a tag would be the normal play on a base runner, a defensive player would not have to throw the ball. NORMAL PLAY IS THE KEY!
6. All pitchers must wear a helmet with an attached faceguard and chin strap.
7. ALL pitchers must band their hair, place it under the helmet or tuck it inside their uniform. This is a must to avoid contact with the pitching machine.
8. A player may not play the position of pitcher more than two (2) innings in a single game

Catchers:

All catchers shall be required to wear full catching gear at all times during a defensive inning. All catchers will be required to play in the catching position (a crouched position directly behind home plate) to catch a pitched ball.

Coaches on the Field:

1. An offensive representative shall be the "pitching coach".
2. The coaching of the batter will ONLY be allowed from the "pitching coach".
3. The "pitching coach" shall not be allowed to instruct or coach any base runners.
4. If a pitching coach does coach a base runner, the runner given the instruction will be called out. (Umpire shall give a team one (1) warning first.)
5. The "pitching coach" will try to avoid interfering with the play after the ball is hit. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the coach interferes with the play, the ball is declared dead and the batter is called out.

Machine Setting:

1. A coach from each team will meet with the umpire before the game to set the machine. The speed shall be set from 35-40 mph and the speed must remain the same for the duration of the game.
2. The machine may be moved to throw more accurately between each half inning or by the discretion of the umpire in order to throw strikes.
3. Each team is allowed 2 practice pitches between each half inning to make adjustments for strikes. This must be done prior to the first batter of the inning.

Machine Safety:

1. If a batted ball strikes the machine and stays within the circle, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.
2. If the ball lands outside the circle the ball remains live.
3. If the ball strikes the coach operating the machine, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.

Batting:

1. NO BUNTING
2. Each batter shall be allowed 5 pitches to hit a fair ball. There are no walks. Should the player foul off the 5th pitch, she shall receive a 6th. If she fouls off the 6th, she shall receive a 7th. The 7th pitch shall be the last pitch and anything other than a fair hit ball will be an out. All swings and misses and fouls count as strikes. Swinging and missing three pitches is an out.
3. There is no throwing of the bat. If a bat is thrown the batter shall receive a warning. If the bat is thrown a second time, the batter shall be called out and all runners shall return to their previous base.

Base Runners:

1. No sliding is allowed.
2. No stealing is allowed.
3. Each runner may leave the base once the ball is pitched, the ball will be dead if not put in play and each runner must return to their base without liability to be put out.
4. Leaving Base Early. One (1) team warning will be receive for any base runner that leaves a base before the ball is pitched. On the next occurrence of leaving the base early, an immediate dead ball will be called; the base runner that left early will be out. Any other base runners will return to their last legally touch base.
5. When the ball is thrown back to the pitcher and she has control of the ball with both feet inside the circle, the play is stopped and time is called by the umpire. If at that time, a runner is more than half way, she shall be awarded the base she was approaching. Less than half way, the runner must return to the previous base they just left.

Overthrows:

Runners will be allowed to advance on all overthrows that stay within the playing boundaries of the field.

Special League Rules for Pixie (6U)

The Game:

Scoring: Runners that cross home plate will be counted as runs. The maximum number of players to cross the plate in the batting team's half inning will be 5.

Defensive Play:

A defensive player must not roll or run the ball to a base or the pitcher. If in the umpire's judgment, this is done outside the NORMAL PLAY, the base runners will be awarded an extra base.

A defensive player will not be allowed to run down any base runner. The defensive player must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a tag would be the normal play on a base runner, a defensive player would not have to throw the ball. NORMAL PLAY IS THE KEY!

Dropped 3rd Strike:

Dropped third strike rule is **NOT** in effect for Pixie (6-U).

Infield Fly Rule:

Infield Fly Rule is **NOT** in effect for Pixie (6-U)

Pitching:

1. The pitchers circle is the same as 10-U.
2. The ball will be pitched by a coach of the offensive team.
3. A team will not be allowed to change a coach pitcher until the inning is over.
4. The coach pitcher may pitch anywhere in the pitching circle as long as his/her foot is on or in front of the halfway line.
5. The coach pitcher must always keep at least one foot within the pitching circle when the ball is released. Penalty is dead ball; add one (1) pitch to the count. If this occurs after the 4th pitch, the batter is out.
6. The coach pitcher is allowed to coach or talk to the batter, but must not leave the circle before the pitch. Violation results in the removal of the coach pitcher.
7. The coach pitcher will try to avoid interfering with the play after the ball has been hit by moving to foul territory. If in the judgment of the umpire, the coach pitcher intentionally interferes with the play:
 - a. The ball is declared dead.
 - b. - The batter is awarded 1st base
 - c. - All other runners will advance one base, only if forced by the award of 1st base to the batter
 - d. The batting team is given an out
8. The defensive player/pitcher must wear a full helmet with an attached faceguard and chinstrap. (A batting helmet with facemask will suffice.)
9. The defensive player/pitcher must stand in the back half of the pitching circle. She may not move forward until the ball is hit. With the exception of the catcher, no defensive player may be closer than 35 feet from the batter until the ball is hit. The four outfielders will remain behind the baseline until the ball has been hit. Violation of this rule will allow the offensive coach to take the resulting play or advance the batter to first base. ("Hit ball means fair or foul")
10. A play will be considered dead once the defensive player/pitcher has control of the ball in the pitching circle, unless making a play.
11. Should the ball be hit directly back to the defensive pitcher on the ground and the pitcher chooses to hold the ball in the circle rather than make a play, all runners will be allowed to advance one base or position at the time the ball goes dead or in the judgment of the umpire, all play has come to a halt, a dead ball will be declared.
12. A defensive pitcher will give the ball to the coach/pitcher at the end of the play.
13. The pitcher will not be allowed to run down the base runner to any base except home. The pitcher must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the judgment of the umpire, it would be a "normal play" to run down a runner, the umpire may call it so as he/she sees fit.
14. A player may not play the position of pitcher for more than two (2) innings in a game.

Playing the Field:

Outfielders must be on the outfield grass until the ball is hit. All defensive infield players must begin play from a position no closer than 35 feet from home plate. Infielders must begin play on the dirt and should start play out of the baselines in order to avoid collisions.

Overthrows:

Runners will be allowed to advance on all overthrows that stay within the playing boundaries of the field. If on the first play after the ball is hit, an overthrown ball goes to the fence in foul territory, the ball is dead. One base is awarded to all base runners at the position at the time of the throw. Example: The runner is running to first base and the ball is overthrown to 1st base and hits the fence. The runner will advance to 2nd base. (Refer to ASA rulebook.)

Catchers:

All catchers will be required to wear full catching gear at all times during the defensive inning. Soccer type knee pads are allowed, but the knee must be completely covered. All catchers will be required to play in the catching position to catch a pitched ball, (a crouched position directly behind home plate).

Batter:

There will be a maximum of five (5) pitches allowed to a batter. If a batter fails to hit a fair ball after receiving 5 pitches, she will be out. If a batter swings and misses three (3) pitches, she will be out. All fouls and foul tips count as strikes and toward the five (5) pitch limit. There are NO walks. Should the batter foul off the 5th pitch, she will be allowed a 6th pitch. In the event the batter fouls a 6th pitch, she will be given a 7th pitch. If after the 7th pitch the batter has failed to hit a fair ball, the batter will be called out. Swinging and missing three (3) pitches is an out.

Bunting is NOT allowed!

If the bat is thrown entirely outside the circle, the player will receive a warning. The second offense will be an automatic out and the runners will return to their starting base.

Base Runners:

In the event, more than one runner is running to the same base, the rear runner will be sent back to the previous base.

Runners who are already over half way to a base may continue to the next base, if less than half way they must return to the last base occupied when the ball became dead.

If a runner fails to maintain foot contact with the base while the pitcher has the ball, a dead ball will be called and the umpire will issue a warning to the offensive coach for the first offense. The second offense and subsequent offenses will result in the runner being called out. Only one warning will be issued per team per game.

Stealing is NOT allowed!

Sliding is NOT allowed!

Playing Field:

1. The distance between bases shall be 60 feet.
2. Pitching distance is 35 feet.
3. A sixteen (16) foot circle will be placed around the pitching plate. A line bisecting the pitching circle will be drawn starting on the first base side and ending on the third base side of the circle.
4. A line will be drawn indicating the half way mark between bases.

Equipment:

An 11" SOFT-TOUCH ball will be used. (Provided by the participating teams)