

# 2017 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 USA/ASA Softball.**

### **The Game:**

A regulation game shall be:

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

**By USA/ASA Rule, Sixty (60) seconds are allowed between innings. Please hustle players in and out of the Dugout. Help your catcher get equipment on BEFORE the half inning is over. Violation of this rule, may result in Balls (or Strikes) being called on the current batter.**

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

The Game Clock starts when the meeting at Home Plate with the Umpires and Coaches concludes.

### **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 **LAST SCHEDULED REGULATION INNING**, a maximum of 7 runs shall be the rule. The runs not obtained in previous innings are NOT accumulated with the next inning's runs.

### **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. 10-U, 12-U, 14-U and 18-U must wear batting helmets with a face-guard. Chinstraps are optional but are strongly encouraged.
4. Machine Pitch (8-U) must wear batting helmets with face-guard and chinstraps.
5. 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.
6. All Age Divisions - Only NON-METAL cleats are allowed in SPGF sponsored play. Included but not limited to Pre-season Tournament, Regular Season, End of Season Tournament and Fall Ball. USA/ASA Rule 3, Section 6, Letter G, EFFECT: Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the Umpire, shall be Ejected.

### **Coaches/Teams/Rosters:**

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. At least two (2) Coaches must be ACE Certified per team with a minimum of one (1) ACE Certified Coach per team in a coaching role at every game. First violation is a warning to the Head Coach and subsequent violations will result in the Executive Board issuing a forfeit to the offending team. Any person on the field or in the dugout must fill out and turn in the required coaches paperwork.

Rosters of all teams shall consist of at least 10 players. Each Manager will exchange rosters prior to the game.

Each team will bat the lineup.

Defense shall consist of 10 players for 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 hit.

For 6u - Defense shall consist of maximum of 6 players in the infield and the remaining players on the roster may play in the outfield. The outfielders must start on the grass, but may play in once the ball is hit.

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.

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 six (6) outs 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.

Violation of #1 or #2 above will result in a forfeit of the game.

Pitchers may use the pitching motions allowed in USA/ASA Rules

**Refer to the USA/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 and the pitcher must be removed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> conference.
2. A pitching change without a conference counts towards a conference against the pitcher leaving the pitching position.
3. Any defensive conference is a conference on the current pitcher.
4. A pitcher can only be charged a maximum of 3 outs per inning.
5. If a team reaches the run limit in an inning, the pitcher in the circle shall be credited with the outs not actually earned.
6. The Pitcher's Glove CANNOT have Yellow markings on it which also includes the stitching. If a glove is found, the pitcher will have to change gloves or mark out the yellow on the glove with a black marker. This rule does not apply to 6u and 8u. i

## **Courtesy Runners:**

In SPGF, everyone bats in the lineup so courtesy runners are not allowed except:

For Age Division 8u, 10u, 12u, 14u, With two outs, the catcher is allowed to have a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner must be the player making the second out. This will allow the catcher time to get equipment on for the next inning.

## **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 are 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 Coaches:**

Offensive team may have two (2) coaches on the field at a time (1<sup>st</sup> Base and 3<sup>rd</sup> Base). These 2 coaches must remain in their respected coach's boxes.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Pixie (6-U) and MP (8-U) have 3 coaches (1<sup>st</sup> Base, 3<sup>rd</sup> Base and Pitching Coach)

Interference by Offensive Coaches – “When a coach intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball, or interferes with the defensive team’s opportunity to make a play on another runner, the ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference is out. All runners not out must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference (USA/ASA Rule 8, Section 7, Article O)

EXCEPTION: Special League Rules for Pixie (6U) - Pitching Section - #7

### **Defensive Coach:**

One Defensive Coach is allowed out of the dugout. This coach may use 1 bucket on the field for sitting purposes. The coach may not stand/sit closer to home plate than the end fence of the dugout and may not stand/sit closer to the infield than 3ft from the dugout fence.

EXCEPTION:

1. Pixie (6-U) One Defensive Coach and One Catching Coach. The Defensive Coach will follow the above rule. The Catching Coach will follow the rule defined in the Special League Rules for Pixie(6U)

Obstruction by Defensive Coaches - If any Defensive Coach intentionally obstructs with the live play, the penalty will be an immediately dead ball, and all runners will be awarded 2 extra bases from their last legally touched base.

## **Weather:**

If inclement weather is imminent or any lightning is seen or thunder is heard, an Umpire/UIC/Board Members in Charge may call the game due to weather. Three (3) complete innings played is considered an official game.

If a game is called due to weather, the following will determine the possible outcome of the game.

- The game has not completed 3 innings; the game will be continued from the stopping point and finished on the next available day (pending scheduling).
- The game has completed at least 3 innings, The Home Team has not completed their turn at bat and the Home Team is not in the lead but is able to "catch up" in the current inning. The score will revert back to the last inning completed and the game will be over.
- If the game has completed at least 3 innings, The Home Team is ahead in the bottom of an inning. The game will end with the current score.
- If the game has completed at least 3 innings, If either the Home Team or the Visitor Team is ahead more than the allotted runs in the current inning. The game will end with the current score.

### **Pulling Up Players:**

If a team is short players to field a full team, 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. For 6u and 8u the pitcher and catcher cannot chant due to the pitching coach trying to talk to the batter.

### **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:**

In order for a player to attempt to play up a division, a player must have completed all of the following.

1. Play at least one year in their designated age division
2. If the player is one year younger than required to play in the next age division, then the player will have the option to move up.

Example:

If the player is age 6 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> she would have the option to play 6u or 8u

If the player is age 8 as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, she would have the option to play 8u or 10u

If the player is age 10 as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, she would have the option to play 10u or 12u

If the player is age 12 as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, she would have the option to play 12u or 14u

## 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.

The defensive player must play the "Normal Location" of her position and must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a tag on the runner or completing a forced out (stepping on the bag), a defensive player would not have to throw the ball. A "Run Down Situation" ("Hot Box", "Pickle") is a NORMAL part of Play.

### **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. All pitchers must wear a helmet with an attached faceguard and chin strap.
6. 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.
7. A player may not play the position of pitcher more than six (6) outs in a single game.
8. If a team reaches the run limit in an inning, the pitcher in the circle shall be credited with the outs not actually earned.

### **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." **This coach must stay next to the pitching machine in order to protect any player from getting injured by the machine.**
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.
6. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Coaches cannot coach the batter. They may only coach the base runners. There is a line between coaching and cheering the batter from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Coaches. If in the umpire's judgment, this line has been crossed, 1 strike will be given to the batter. (Umpire shall give a team one (1) warning first.)

### **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 practice pitches to set the machine before their turn at bat. The practice pitches must be made during the allotted 60 second inning change and before the team's first batter of the inning.

### **Machine Safety:**

1. **THE PITCHING COACH MUST STAY NEXT TO THE PITCHING MACHINE IN ORDER TO PROTECT ANY AND ALL PLAYERS FROM GETTING INJURED FROM THE MACHINE.**
2. If a batted ball strikes the machine and stays within the circle, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.
3. If a batted ball strikes the machine and lands outside the circle the ball remains live.
4. If a batted ball strikes the coach operating the machine, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.
5. If the batted ball strikes the machine and immediately goes into foul territory, the ball is still considered a LIVE ball.
6. If a ball is thrown and hits the machine, the ball will be considered a live ball unless the umpire calls the ball dead for safety reasons.

### **Batting:**

1. NO BUNTING - If in the umpire's judgment, the bunt was intentional, the batter will be called out.
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.

### **Base Runners:**

1. No sliding is allowed. If in the umpire's judgment, the slide was intentional, the runner will be called out.
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. An immediate dead ball will be called; the base runner that left early will be out. All other base runners will return to their last legally touched 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. See Page 2 - RUN LIMITS: for maximum scoring per inning

**Stealing is NOT allowed!** Runner will return to the last legally touched base.

**Sliding is NOT allowed!** If in the umpire's judgment, the slide was intentional, the runner will be called out.

**Bunting is NOT allowed!** If in the umpire's judgment, the bunt was intentional, the batter will be called out.

### **Playing Field:**

1. The distance between bases shall be 60 feet.
2. The pitchers circle is the same as 10-U. The Maximum Pitching distance is 35 feet.
3. A line will be drawn indicating the half way mark between bases.

### **Catching Coach:**

A Catching Coach will be from the Defensive team. The Catching Coach will assist the Player catcher with the return of the ball back to the Offensive Coach Pitcher in a timely manner.

While the batter is in the batter's box, and/or during a live ball situation, the Catching Coach will not instruct any defensive player. Violation of this rule will result in one (1) warning then the next violation will result in the removal of the Catching Coach from the game.

If the ball is put into play, both the Offensive Coach Pitcher and Defensive Coach Catcher must retreat from the playing field to either dugout side which is away from the play. They must remain in the same defined location as if they were a Defensive Coach. (Defined by the dugout fence and no more than 3 ft. from the fence)

### **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.

The defensive player must play the "Normal Location" of her position and must throw the ball to the base or the runner will be called safe. EXCEPTION: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a tag on the runner or completing a forced out (stepping on the bag), a defensive player would not have to throw the ball. A "Run Down Situation" ("Hot Box", "Pickle") is a NORMAL part of Play.

### **Dropped 3rd Strike and Infield Fly Rules:**

"Dropped Third Strike Rule" and "Infield Fly Rule" are **NOT** in effect for Pixie (6-U).

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> base. (Refer to USA/ASA rulebook.)

## **Catchers:**

All catchers will be required to wear a Helmet with a Facemask and a Chinstrap. The catcher may wear any other protective gear they wish, although it is not required, we do encourage protective gear. Soccer type knee/shin guards are allowed. All catchers are encouraged to play in the proper catching position to catch a pitched ball, which is a crouched stance directly behind home plate.

## **Pitching:**

1. An 11" SOFT-TOUCH ball will be used. (Provided by the participating teams) and will be pitched by a coach of the offensive team.
2. A team will not be allowed to change a coach pitcher until the inning is over.
3. The coach pitcher may pitch anywhere in the pitching circle as long as his/her foot is on or in front of the pitching rubber.
4. The coach pitcher must always keep at least one foot completely inside of the outer parameter of the circle and must maintain contact with the ground until after 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.
5. The coach pitcher is allowed to coach or talk to the batter, but must not leave the circle before the pitch. The coach pitcher cannot coach the runners and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches can only coach the runners and may not coach the batter. Violation results in the removal of the offending coach.
6. 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
7. The defensive player/pitcher must wear a full helmet with an attached faceguard and chinstrap. (A batting helmet with facemask will suffice.)
8. 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")
9. Time will be called after every play. There are 2 possible ways to have time called.
  - a. Time will be called when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner and no play is being made. All runners will return back to their last legally touched base, no exceptions.
  - b. The ball is returned to the Defensive Player Pitcher with both feet inside the pitcher's circle. If a runner more than half way to the next base when time is called, the runner will be awarded the next base.
10. 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.
11. A defensive pitcher will give the ball to the coach/pitcher at the end of the play.
12. A player may not play the position of pitcher more than six (6) outs in a single game.
13. If a team reaches the run limit in an inning, the pitcher in the circle shall be credited with the outs not actually earned.

### **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 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, she will be allowed a 6<sup>th</sup> pitch. In the event the batter fouls a 6<sup>th</sup> pitch, she will be given a 7<sup>th</sup> pitch. If after the 7<sup>th</sup> 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. The batter may use ANY bat that has been authorized by ANY Softball or Baseball Association as long as it is free from any defects as defined in the official USA/ASA rules.

### **Base Runners:**

1. In the event, more than one runner is running to the same base, the rear runner will be sent back to the previous base.
2. 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.
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. 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.