



HarrisburgNC

PARKS & RECREATION



***Fall Softball Youth League***

***RULES AND REGULATIONS  
2023***

***YOUTH SOFTBALL  
7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15***

**Youth Softball League**  
**2023 League Rules and Regulations – Page 1**

**Article 1. Eligibility**

- Section 1. The date of **June 1, 2023** will be the age cutoff date for the **2023** Fall season. The players' age on that day will determine what age group they participate in.
- Section 2. A younger player may participate in an upper age division. They can only move up one division (EX: a 7-8 player can move up to 9-10 but not 11-12). However, after one game in the upper age division, the player is ruled to be ineligible to participate in his or her respective age group for that season. Player may move back down to the lower age group for the following season if necessary.
- Section 3. Each player must be on the team roster before they play their first game to be eligible to play. Team rosters must be on file with the league coordinator.
- Section 4. A new player may be added to a team roster after the cutoff date with the approval of the league coordinator.

**Article 2 Team Composition**

- Section 1. Each league/association is responsible for conducting their registration and draft
- Section 2. It is the responsibility of the league coordinator to conduct drafts, registration, and for placing players on the teams. Parents with questions or concerns should speak to their coordinator with the concern when it arises.

**Article 3 Duties of the Coach**

- Section 1. Must wear photo ID badge at all practices and games or be subject to dismissal from duties.
- Section 2. All head coaches must be at least 18 years of age.
- Section 3. The coach is responsible for exchanging lineups before each game with the other team and to meet with the umpires before the game starts.
- Section 4. It is the duty of the head coach to maintain proper conduct among his team and fans at all times.

**Article 4 Game and Weather Postponements**

- Section 1. In case of inclement weather on practice days, the coach should contact the players on the team. A coach should use reasonable judgment during threatening weather and remove his team from the field if necessary.
- Section 2. For game day cancellations, it is the duty of the home field/association to cancel games when playing conditions are not adequate. The home field coordinator is responsible to contact the coordinators of the teams playing at their site and the officials booking agent. Each coordinator should then call their respective coaches who are responsible for contacting their players.

**Article 5 Jurisdiction of Rules**

- Section 1. The Youth Softball League Rules are under the jurisdiction of the Youth Softball Harrisburg Recreation Coordinators. They have the authority to make amendments to the rules in order to obtain the program objectives.

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**Article 6**      **Officials**

- Section 1.      Officials for each site are the sole responsibility of the respective association for which home games are scheduled.
- Section 2.      After a game has begun, assigned league coordinators and league officials will be responsible for discontinuing the game for any reason.
- Section 3.      All officials should report ejections of a player or coach to the home site coordinator. Each site should then contact the league coordinator of the ejected party with information about the ejection who is in return responsible for the disciplinary action as outlined.
- Section 4.      In the event that only one official is present for a game, that official must start the game on time and play until the second official arrives.

**Article 7**      **Code of Conduct**

- Section 1.      Coaches should always keep in mind that they are setting examples in sportsmanship and fair play and should conduct themselves accordingly. Constant yelling and abusive behavior toward players on either team is strictly prohibited.
- Section 2.      Any coach not carrying out the duties and responsibilities and policies as established by the league will be subject to dismissal from the league.
- Section 3.      A coach will be suspended indefinitely for playing ineligible players.

**Article 8**      **Protests**

- Section 1.      No Protest

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Section 1. Players must attend practices to be eligible for games. Any player not attending practice and shows up for the game that week is subject to the coach's option to play or not. A coach must announce to the home plate umpire before the game which players are being held out for missing practices. The coach must also notify their coordinator of the situation prior to the game and state that the player did not attend practices during the week.

**Article 10**     **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Section 1. Players, coaches, and fans should conduct themselves in a sportsman like manner at all times. This includes before, during, or after a game. Players and coaches who are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct (throwing equipment, arguing, etc.) will be suspended for 7 days. A second ejection during the season will result in an indefinite suspension from all Harrisburg participating leagues.

Section 2. Any player, coach, or fan that is ejected from a game or facility for fighting, profanity, or threatening others will be suspended indefinitely from all facilities for all Harrisburg participating leagues.

Section 3. If a player, coach, fan, or official's actions become harmful and disruptive to the program, they face being suspended from their remaining games for that season.

Section 4. A player or coach who pulls a team off the field for any reason will be suspended indefinitely. If the suspension occurs in the last game of the season, an indefinite suspension will occur.

Section 5. No player, coach, official, or fan shall at any time lay a hand on, push, shove, strike, or threaten to strike another player, coach, fan, or official before, during, or after a game. Officials include umpire, scorekeeper, coordinators and designated volunteers, department staff personnel, other players, coaches, or fans. This will result in an indefinite suspension from all Harrisburg participating leagues.

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**North Carolina High School Federation Rules apply with the following exception of the local league rules.**

**Team Composition**

**7-8, 9-10**

1. A team must field 7 players from its own roster to avoid a forfeit.
2. A team can play 10 players on defense (6 infielders and 4 outfielders).
3. An outfielder cannot freeze a play, acquire a timeout, or make the first play on a base runner.
4. The ball must be thrown to an infielder to make a play at a base or on a base runner.
5. Players arriving after the start of the game can be added to the bottom of the lineup without penalty.

**11-12, 13-15**

1. A team must field 7 players from its own roster to avoid a forfeit.
2. A team can play 10 players on defense (6 infielders and 4 outfielders).
3. Players arriving after the start of the game can be added to the bottom of the lineup without penalty.

**Pickup Players**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. A team must have 7 of its own players before being allowed to pick up players.
2. There is a maximum of 3 players allowed to be picked up. Pickup players are required to play outfield only and must bat in the last 3 positions of the lineup.
3. **If players are picked up a team is limited to playing with no more than 10 players.**
4. Pickup players must be from the same age group as the teams **AND** be on a team in the league **AND** must be replaced by eligible team members if they arrive after the start of the game.
5. Players removed from the game because of sickness, leaving early, injury, etc. are skipped in the lineup with no penalty. First time the player bats after being removed from the lineup is not an out. Player can re-enter on their next at bat after being removed but if they do not return at that time then they are out for the remainder of the game. They are not charged with an out.

**Grace Period**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. There is a 10-minute grace period from the games scheduled start time for a team that does not have 7 eligible players. A team with less than 7 players after the grace period will forfeit the game. Grace period time begins from the **scheduled game time**.

**Length of Game**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The length of the game is 6 innings.
2. Once an inning has started it must be finished, provided the home team is behind when it is their turn to bat.
3. No new inning shall be started with less than 10 minutes remaining in the time limit.
4. A new inning begins when the third out is made in the previous ½ inning.

**Regulation Game**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. It is a regulation game if 4 or more innings have been played and game is called because of darkness, curfew, etc.

**Tie Games**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. A regular season game that is tied at the end of six full innings, or that has reached the time limit will not continue, and will end in a tie.

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**Run Lead**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The run lead is in effect as follow: a 15 run lead after 3 or a 10 run lead after 4 providing the losing team has had equal number of bats.

**Time Limits**

**7-8**

1. The time limit shall be 1 hour and fifteen minutes from the start of the first pitch of the game.
2. A new inning will not start within 10 minutes of the time limit.

**9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The time limit shall be 1 hour and thirty minutes from the start of the first pitch of the game.
2. A new inning will not start within 10 minutes of the time limit.

**Curfew Times**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12**

1. Weekday curfew times for all practices and games are 9:30 pm.
2. Weekend curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.

**13-15**

1. Weekday curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.
2. Weekend curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.

**Participation Rule**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The entire roster shall bat.
2. If more than 10 players are present for the game, no player shall sit on defense in consecutive innings unless they are injured or sick.
3. No player, unless sick or injured, should sit a second inning in a game until all the players on the roster have sat at least one inning.

**Base Paths & Pitching Distances**

**7-8, 9-10**

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
1. Softball pitching distance is 35 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

**11-12**

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
2. Softball pitching distance is 40 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

**13-15**

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
2. Softball pitching distance is 43 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

**Shoes**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Players are not allowed to wear metal cleats.

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**Jewelry**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Jewelry is not allowed to be worn during games.
2. Jewelry is not allowed to be taped over.
  - a. (Penalty) When discovered, the player is asked to remove it. Failure to remove it will result in that player being removed from the game.

**Batters Helmets**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Batting helmets, with front cages, must be worn by all batters and base runners at all times.
2. Failure to wear a helmet results in player being removed from the game.

**Catchers Gear**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Catchers must wear mask/helmet, shin/leg guards, throat guard, and chest protector during all practices and games.

**Misc. Equipment**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The option of a mouthpiece or faceguard is mandatory for all defensive players.
2. A pitcher, or player playing the defensive position of pitcher in 7/8, does not have the option of just a mouthpiece and must wear the faceguard.

**Game Balls**

**7-8, 9-10**

1. Game balls (softball – 11 inch) are the responsibility of the home team on the schedule. They must be Little League or other National Organization approved (PONY, Federation, Dixie, USSSA, NFHS, etc.).

**11-12, 13-15**

1. Game balls (softball – 12 inch) are the responsibility of the home team on the schedule. They must be Little League or other National Organization approved (PONY, Federation, Dixie, USSSA, NFHS, etc.).

**Bats**

**7-8, 9-10**

1. Small barrel bats with 2 ¼ barrel.

**11-12, 13-15**

1. High School Federation Rules apply to bats.

**Defensive Players Position**

**All Age Groups –**

1. In an effort to maximize players actively participating on the field, all age groups can utilize a 4 outfielder alignment, Left Field, Left Center Field, Right Center Field, and Right Field.

**7-8**

1. Defensive player must play even with the pitcher or behind the pitcher on either side.
2. All players must play in the outfield, or at the catcher position, at least one full inning within the first three innings of every game.

**9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. No defensive restrictions for this age group.

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**Offensive Field Coaches**

**7-8**

1. Base coaches and coach pitcher are allowed on the playing field.
2. Base runners coach may only instruct the base runners.
3. Coach (Pitcher) is not allowed to instruct runners.
4. A coach may be positioned behind the catcher to assist with passed balls but they are not allowed to give instructions.

**9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. National Federation Rules apply.

**Defensive Field Coaches**

**7-8**

1. A coach may be positioned on each foul line in the outfield and must remain in dead ball territory at all times in an area (coaching area) that is halfway from outfield fence to first and/or third base.
2. The outfield coach is confined to coaching the outfielders only. A coach in violation of the coaching box rules will be confined to the dugout (can be replaced by another coach).
3. At no time may a coach step onto the playing field except in the case of an injury.

**9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. National Federation Rules apply.

**Batter/Run Limit**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12**

1. Each team may score a maximum of 5 runs in the first inning.
2. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> innings, the team leading may always score 5 runs, even though their lead could be greater than 5 runs.
3. The team behind when batting after the first inning may always be able to score as many runs as possible to even the score and then 5 additional runs in those innings as well.

**13-15**

1. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> innings, teams are allowed to score a maximum of 5 runs or score more than 5 runs to go ahead by no more than 5 runs if they are trailing.
2. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> innings, scoring is unlimited.

**On Deck Batters**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. On deck batters are allowed to go to the opposite circle to be behind batter.

**Speed Up Rules**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Speed up rules will be used for the catcher only.
2. The last batter that is not on base may run for the catcher at any time but it is not mandatory.



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**Bunting**

**7-8**

1. Batters are not permitted to bunt or soft swing at the ball. All hit balls in fair territory will be considered live balls.
2. If a batter does bunt, they will be ruled out and the ball is dead. Baserunners will return to the base they occupied before the pitch.

**9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. National Federation Rules apply for bunting.

**Dropped Third Strike**

**7-8 – Does not apply to this age group.**

**9-10**

1. A batter is declared out and cannot advance on dropped third strike.
2. Runners may advance at their own risk.

**11-12, 13-15**

1. High School Federation Rules apply to dropped third strike

**Base Stealing/ Overthrows**

**7-8**

1. Base stealing is not allowed at any time. Batted balls, unless called foul by the umpire, are live and in play until the defense stops the progress of all runners and the umpire calls time. Ball remains dead until next batter.
2. Runner must stay in contact with the base until the batter has hit the ball.
3. If a runner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the umpire shall indicate the infraction immediately by removing the runner from the base. The ball/pitch becomes dead immediately and NO PITCH is declared.
4. If a runner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the umpire shall indicate the infraction immediately by removing the runner from the base. The ball/pitch becomes dead immediately and NO PITCH is declared.
5. No base runner shall be allowed to advance farther than 1 base on balls fielded in the infield. Balls hit to the outfield are live balls until the defensive team returns the ball to the infield dirt. When the ball is returned to the infield dirt the ball shall be called dead. Base runners that are not half way to the next base when the ball is considered dead should return to the previous base. **Players may not advance on overthrows on the infield under ANY circumstances.**

**9-10**

1. Runners may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. PENALTY: runner is removed from the base and called out. Ball becomes dead and no pitch is declared.
2. The first overthrow at a base on a batted ball will result in the batter and base runners being only able to advance one extra base and they do so at their own risk. **NOTE:** Overthrow is considered any ball **not caught** by the defensive player at any base.
3. A runner who has reached third base safely can only advance home on a batted ball or walk (when forced to do so).

**11-12, 13-15**

1. High School Federation Rules apply

**Appeal Play**

### **7-8, 9-10, 11-12**

1. The appeal play is not in effect.
2. The umpire will call the infraction when play becomes dead.

### **13-15**

1. High School Federation Rules are in effect for appeal plays.

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### **Infield Fly Rule**

#### **7-8, 9-10**

1. There is no infield fly rule for this age division.

#### **11-12, 13-15**

1. High School Federation Infield Fly Rules apply.

### **Head First Sliding**

#### **7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. Head first sliding is not allowed at home plate. **If there is going to be a play at the plate the runner must slide.**
  - a. (Penalty) - Runner is out and ball remains live.
  - b. Dive backs to the bases (head first) are not considered head first sliding.

### **Pitching Limits/Rules**

#### **7-8**

1. The pitcher/coach must start with one foot anywhere within the 8-foot circle.
2. A total of 5 pitches can be thrown.
3. If a batter swings and misses 3 times, the batter is out.
4. The fifth pitch may be fouled or tipped indefinite number of times.
5. There are no bases on balls or hit by pitch advancements to first base.
6. Player (pitcher) must stand beside, even with, or behind the pitcher/coach until the ball is batted.  
**PENALTY:** Batter is awarded first base and other runners advance only if forced to do so.
7. Softball coaches pitch underhand.
8. Any batted ball that hits a pitcher/coach is dead. The pitch will not count and the pitch will be done over.

#### **9-10**

1. A total of 4 innings max per game / 8 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws at least 4 innings or more in a game, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4<sup>th</sup> trip and every trip after the 4<sup>th</sup>, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

### **NO WALKS MODIFICATIONS**

If an At Bat has not concluded after 4 pitches and all 4 pitches have been called balls or the count is 3-1, a coach from the batting team will take the mound.

- The player pitcher will remain on the mound to play defense in the position.
- The coach will have 2 pitches to finalize the at bat.
- The coach will throw the pitch underhanded from the pitching rubber.

- The coach can wind up to throw the pitch but does not have to.
- The coach will throw the ball at a comparable speed to an average pitcher of the division.
- There is no base stealing permitted on pitches thrown by the coach.
- A pitch thrown by a coach may NOT be bunted.
- A walk can NOT be the final result of the at bat.
- Neither pitch thrown by the coach will be called a ball or strike by the umpire.
- The batter will be called out on strikes if they do not put the ball into play by the second pitch.
- A foul ball on the second or subsequent pitch will extend the at bat until the ball is put into play, a swing and miss, or the batter watching the pitch go by.
- If a batted ball strikes the coach who threw the pitch, the ball is declared dead and the pitch will be re-played. Any base runners would return to the base they were on before the pitch.

If an At Bat stands at a 2-2 count after 4 pitches, the player pitcher will have an additional pitch before a coach would come into finish the at bat.

Any at bat that is concluded within 4 pitches would be scored as normal – a ball in play, a strikeout, or a hit by pitch, and the game would continue to the next batter with the player pitcher continuing on the mound.

#### **11-12**

1. A total of 5 innings max per game / 10 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws at least 4 innings or more in a game, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4<sup>th</sup> trip and every trip after the 4<sup>th</sup>, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

#### **13-15**

1. A total of 6 innings max per game / 12 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws 4 innings, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4<sup>th</sup> trip and every trip after the 4<sup>th</sup>, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

#### **Hit Batters**

##### **(9-10, 11-12 & 13-15)**

1. If the same pitcher hits 4 batters that pitcher must be immediately removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
2. The player may continue to play any other position.

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**Tournament Play (Only applies to Harrisburg Teams)**

**7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15**

1. The tournament shall be single elimination
2. There will be no seedings except for separating the 1 and 2 teams which will be determined by the coordinators. Every other team will be placed randomly in the bracket.
3. There will be NO pick up players during tournament play. Teams must have 7 of their own players to start a game.
4. Time limits will remain the same during tournament play. If the time limit expires and the teams are tied than we will go to International Rule to begin the next inning.
  - a. International Rule – The batting teams last out from the previous inning will start the current inning at second base. The rule will continue until a winner is determined.
5. All tournament games that are halted before a winner is determined shall resume from the exact point where play was ceased.
6. The ten run rule, fifteen run rule will be in effect.
7. The player participation rule will remain the same during tournament play.
8. If a coach is not following the participation rule the coach will be suspended for one calendar year.
9. If a player arrives late, he can enter the game immediately and will bat last in the batting line up. There will be no penalty.
10. The home team will keep score and both teams must sign the scoresheet provided by the hosting organization in order to make it a final game.

**Revised on August 24, 2022**