

HARNETT COUNTY GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE
2010 FAST-PITCH RULES

Table of Contents

- I. League Administration
- II. League Divisions
- III. Field and Equipment
- IV. Players, Substitutes, and Playing Time
- V. The Game
- VI. Pitching
- VII. Base Running
- VIII. Conduct, Appeals, and Protests
- IX. End of Season Tournaments

I. League Administration

- A. The League shall be governed by the Board of Directors of the Harnett County Girls Softball League.
- B. The Harnett County Girls Softball League Board of Directors reserves the right to make changes to these rules and regulations as they deem necessary.
- C. The League will abide by the official rules of **Tar Heel Leagues, Inc.** with the following exceptions.

II. League Divisions

- A. Cut-off Date: age of participant *prior* to **January 1st** of the current year.
- B. The following age divisions will be offered by the League:

10U	shall not turn 11 before January 1, 2010
12U	shall not turn 13 before January 1, 2010
14U	shall not turn 15 before January 1, 2010
17U	shall not turn 18 before January 1, 2010

* In the event there are not enough participants to form a 17U division, a 15U division will be created to replace 14U. The 15U division will include ages 13-15.

- C. Birth Certificates are required for every participant. It will be each department's responsibility to have a copy of each participant's birth certificate on file.
- D. Participants may not compete in more than one (1) division within the county during the same season.

III. Field and Equipment

- A. Field Dimensions

- 1. The base distance will be 60 ft. for all age groups.
- 2. The use of a Double First Base is optional. However, the rules that apply to the double first base will be in affect if the double base is used. On the initial play, the defender must use the white portion of the base in fair territory and the batter-runner must use the colored portion in foul territory. Players may reverse sides if the throw is coming from foul territory. [NFHS Rule 8, Section 10]
- 3. The Pitching distance will be as follows:

10U	35 ft
12U and 14U	40 ft
17U	43 ft

- B. The game balls shall be furnished by the home team and meet the following specifications:
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 10U | 11" diameter, .47 COR max, .375 compression max, may be white or yellow and shall meet NFHS standards |
| 12U, 14U, and 17U | 12" diameter, .47 COR max, .375 compression max, may be white or yellow and shall meet NFHS standards |
- C. Protective equipment
- All batters and base runners shall wear a helmet with dual earflaps and a **face guard (mandatory 2010)**.
 - Catchers shall wear a helmet, mask, detachable throat protector, body protector, and shin guards.

IV. Players, Substitutes, and Playing Time

A. Lineups

- All lineups must be turned into the official scorekeeper 10 minutes prior to game time.
- 10U shall play with ten (10) defensive players consisting of four (4) outfielders and shall use a **Continuous Batting Order**. Each coach shall make up a batting order consisting of all members of the team that are present for the game. Players will bat in this order throughout the game. Any player that arrives late must be placed at the end of the lineup. *REMINDER: Each player must meet the minimum defensive playing requirement.*
- 12U, 14U, and 17U shall play with nine (9) defensive players. The lineup may include ten (10) batters if the optional extra player (EP) is used.

NOTE: The DP/FLEX option will not be used during League play.

- Short-Handed Rule: Teams must have at least eight (8) players to start or finish a game. The vacant position must be at the bottom of the lineup. If additional players arrive after the game has begun, teams may fill the 9th (and/or 10th) position and must place that player(s) at the bottom of the lineup immediately. 12U, 14U, and 17U: A team may add an EP in the 10th position of the lineup once the game has started as long as that team has not already batted through the lineup. A team with fewer than eight (8) players at any point during the game must forfeit the game.

*NOTE: The vacant position(s) in the lineup shall **NOT** be an automatic out at the start of the game. However, a position that is vacated during the game shall only be declared an OUT due to an ejection/restriction to the dugout until it is filled with a legal substitute.*

B. Substitutions

- ALL** substitutions, offensive and/or defensive, must be reported to the official scorekeeper.
- Free Substitution Rule: Any player, starter or substitute, may be withdrawn from the game and re-enter the game an unlimited number of times and at any time during the game. Offensive and Defensive substitutions will be treated separately.
 - Offense: Batters may be substituted for with any player not currently in the lineup. A starter and her substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time. If a player re-enters the lineup, she must occupy the same batting position whenever in the lineup. A violation results in illegal substitution. A player may be in the lineup without playing the field that same inning.
 - Defense: Any player on the roster may play defense at any time for any player. Players can play defense without being in the batting lineup (must report to scorekeeper to record playing time). Pitchers are allowed to return to the pitching position only once per inning.

C. Playing Time

- All participants shall play a minimum of six (6) defensive outs and one (1) turn at bat. Minimum playing time must be completed by the end of the fourth (4th) inning. *Recommendation: substitute defensive players every inning to help players get their playing time.*

2. Any player that does not play the minimum requirements MUST start the next game and make up ALL missed playing time.

Example: A player does not get her turn at bat and plays only three (3) defensive outs. She must START the next game, get two (2) turns at bat, and play NINE (9) defensive outs.

3. Coaches should report possible violation of the mandatory playing rules to their Department Director. Violations of the mandatory playing rules will be investigated by the Board of Directors with penalties issued accordingly.
4. The Mandatory Playing Rule may only be waived for disciplinary reasons and injury. Players being disciplined or injured must be reported to and approved by the Board of Directors member of the host site.

V. The Game

A. Regulation Game:

1. 10U and 12U Six (6) innings
2. 14U and 17U Seven (7) innings

- B. Time Limit: All age groups will play one hour and twenty (1:20) minutes. Time starts at the conclusion of the pre-game conference. If time expires during an inning, that inning shall be completed unless the home team is batting with the lead. A new inning begins when the last out of the previous inning is made.

- C. Grace Period: A ten (10) minute grace period will be given for the first game of the day only. The grace period begins at the scheduled start time and will count toward the time limit. The game shall begin as soon as both teams have at least 8 players present.

- D. Run Rule: The game will be declared official when a team is leading by at least ten (10) runs after four (4) complete innings in the 10U and 12U divisions and after five (5) complete innings in the 14U and 17U divisions. If the home team is leading, the game shall be official after 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 innings respectively. If the visiting team is leading, then the home team must have its turn at bat.

E. Run Limit per Inning:

1. 10U – The offensive team may score a maximum of five (5) runs per inning for the duration of the game. The next half inning shall begin after five (5) runs are scored or three (3) outs are recorded, whichever occurs first.
2. 12U – The offensive team may score a maximum of seven (7) runs during the first three (3) innings. The next half inning shall begin after seven (7) runs are scored or three (3) outs are recorded, whichever occurs first. There is no Run Limit after the 3rd inning.
3. 14U and 17U – no Run Limit

- F. **Tie Game:** The International Tie-Breaker Rule will be in affect if the game is tied at the end of regulation or at the completion of an inning during which the time limit expired. Only one (1) extra inning will be played to determine a winner. If the game is still tied after one (1) complete additional inning, the game will be declared a tie. **International Tie-Breaker Rule:** At the start of each half inning, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who last completed an at-bat being placed on second base. If the player who should begin the half inning at second base is absent, then the player who bats just before them is placed at second base.

NOTE: If a tied game is going to affect the regular season standings, then the following procedure will be used to break a tie:

1. Head to Head Competition
2. Points System: 2 points per win, 1 point per tie, 0 points per loss
3. Coin Flip to determine standings

- G. Scorekeepers: The host site should provide official scorekeepers who will be responsible for time limits, run limits, playing time, and keeping score. Scoreboards are a courtesy and may be used if available. If an official score keeper is not provided, the home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook. The official scorekeeper provided by the home team should sit behind the fence at home plate.

- H. 10U only: **NO Infield Fly Rule**

- I. Cancelled/Suspended Games: It is the responsibility of the host site to notify the opposing team's department of any cancellations. Each department is responsible for contacting its coaches. Any games suspended due to weather conditions before it is an official game shall be continued at a later date from the exact point the game was suspended.

VI. Pitching

A. Pitching Regulations:

1. 10U and 12U – No pitcher shall pitch more than six (6) innings in consecutive games.
2. 14U and 17U – No pitcher shall pitch more than seven (7) innings in consecutive games.
3. One (1) pitch constitutes an inning.
4. The innings pitched count is reset if a team has at least seven (7) days between games (i.e. – Monday to Monday of the following week).

- B. 10U only: **NO WALKS!** The pitcher will pitch until the batter has put the ball in play, is put out, or has a four (4) ball count. When ball 4 is reached, an offensive coach may pitch a maximum of three (3) pitches from the pitching plate to finish the count. **EXAMPLE:** on a 4-0 count, the coach gets up to three (3) pitches; on a 4-1 count, the coach gets up to two (2) pitches; on a 4-2 count, the coach gets only one (1) pitch. Coach has unlimited pitches if the batter fouls strike 3. All pitches from the coach shall be called a strike.

***NOTE:** Bunting will be allowed only when the player-pitcher delivers the pitch. A batter may not attempt to bunt when the coach is pitching. EFFECT: Dead Ball. Batter is OUT.*

- C. 10U ONLY: If a batted fair ball hits the coach-pitcher before any defensive player touches the ball, it is a **dead ball** and:

1. If unintentional, the batter is awarded first base and all other runners advance one (1) base if forced.
2. If ruled intentional, **the batter and the lead runner are declared OUT**; all other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

D. Pitcher's Delivery [NFHS Rule 6 (F.P.)]

1. Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
2. About the Pitch:
 - a) The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
 - b) Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.
3. Warm Up Pitches: The pitcher shall receive no more than one (1) minute to complete no more than 5 warm up pitches. If the catcher is not ready to warm up the pitcher, a coach or another player may catch the warm up pitches until the catcher is ready. If the catcher did not receive any of the previous warm up pitches, then one (1) additional pitch may be thrown to the catcher.

***NOTE:** Any youth participant warming up a pitcher must wear a helmet and mask with detachable throat protector.*

VII. Base Running

A. Base Runners may leave the base:

1. 10U – when the pitch reaches the catcher

PENALTY: Delayed dead ball; the runner is OUT.

2. 12U, 14U, and 17U – when the pitcher releases the ball
PENALTY: Dead ball; the runner is OUT.
- B. 10U only: Base Runners may steal only one (1) base per pitch and only when a player-pitcher is pitching.
Runners may NOT steal home.
NOTE: Runners may NOT advance on an overthrow after stealing a base.
- C. 10U and 12U only: Batters may NOT advance to first base on a dropped third strike.
- D. 14U and 17U only: Batters may advance to first base on a dropped third strike if:
1. There are less than 2 outs and 1st base is NOT occupied.
 2. There are 2 outs.
- E. Sliding Rule: **Base Runners do NOT have to slide!** However, Base Runners MUST attempt to avoid a collision if the defensive player has possession of the ball or is about to catch a thrown ball. If the base runner does not attempt to avoid a collision and makes aggressive contact with the defensive player, she shall be automatically declared out and will be ejected from the game if deemed flagrant.
- F. Courtesy Runners: May be used for pitcher and catcher only and shall be players who are not currently in the lineup; all players in the lineup (continuous batting order/9 or fewer players) – last batter not on base.
1. **Mandatory for the catcher with 2 outs** (must be last batter not on base if no substitute is present)
 2. Optional for the pitcher at any time and for the catcher with less than 2 outs

VIII. Conduct, Appeals, and Protests

- A. Teams must clean up their respective dugouts after each game before leaving the field.
- B. CONDUCT: Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner for a youth recreational sporting event. Any player, coach, or spectator is subject for removal from the game by the officials or field supervisor for unsportsmanlike conduct, profanity, or other objectionable behavior. Coaches who are ejected from a regular season game must leave the park facilities immediately and are not eligible to coach another game that same day. Players ejected from a regular season game must be restricted to the bench/dugout area for adult supervision purposes unless a parent/guardian is there to remove the player from the park. Any coach or player ejected from a game will also be suspended for at least the next game but may be more upon review of the Board of Directors. Tournament game ejections will be handled by the tournament's Protest Committee on site.
- C. APPEALS:
1. 10u/12u – No appeals shall be permitted
 2. 14u/17u – Appeals shall be handled per NFHS rules
- D. PROTESTS: **A judgment call may not be protested!!!** The only legal protest is one which involves a violation of playing rules or the use of an illegal player, and is protested at time of infraction.
- E. PROTEST PROCEDURES:
1. Notify the Umpires and Official Scorekeeper at the point of the infraction.
 2. Continue the game under protest.
 3. All protests should be submitted in writing to the offended team's department or the host team's department within 24 hours of the point of protest. Attach a check for \$25.00 for the protest fee (payable to the Host Site). Check will be returned if protest is upheld.
 4. **The protest committee will render a decision within 24 hours of receiving the protest.**