

Youth Softball Rules and Regulations

The purpose of youth recreational athletic leagues is to provide an enjoyable organized experience under capable adult supervision for youth in Pittsylvania County. The program is organized to promote sportsmanship, cooperation, and fair play at all times while developing knowledge and skills of the game.

The Pittsylvania County Youth Softball Leagues are governed by the **“National Federation of State High School Associations”** rules and regulations which will apply except as modified herein.

Age Classification: Playing age is that age attained by a player prior to September 30th of the current softball season (2021).

League	Ages	Playing Field	Game Time Limits	Ball Used
Coach Pitch/8U (no score kept, no umpers)	6-8	Bases - 60' Toe Plate – Bottom of Circle	Single - 1 hour 15 minutes (finish inning) DH'er – 1 hour (finish inning)	Yellow 11", RIF 1 Sof-Dot equivalent
10U	9-10	Bases - 60' Toe Plate - 35'	Single game at a site on any day – 1.5 hours (finish inning) Two games at UNLIT site on weekday – STRICT 1 hour 10-minute limit	Yellow 11", RIF 10 or equivalent
13U	11-13	Bases - 60' Toe Plate - 40'	Single game at a site on any day – 1.5 hours (finish inning) Two games at UNLIT site on weekday – STRICT 1 hour 10-minute limit	Yellow 12", Official NFHS

I. Player Eligibility

- A. Players must be a Pittsylvania County resident or attend a Pittsylvania County Public School to be eligible to participate. If a player moves out of the county, they may continue to participate in the program until the season is over.
- B. All players must have an Athletic Registration Form which includes the medical release and liability release completed, signed by parent or guardian and on file with the league before he or she is allowed to practice or play in a game.
- C. A child must play for the area represents the high school district in which they live or Pittsylvania County Public School they attend.
- D. No player will be released from his or her assigned team after the first practice.

II. Team Rosters

- A. Rosters are limited to a minimum of ten (10) and a maximum of fifteen (15) players per team.
- B. Any area fielding more than one team per age group must place players on teams using the Pittsylvania County Draft Policy. There will be NO CUTS for players that registered and paid on-time. No exceptions.
- C. For new players, a copy of their birth certificate must be kept on file with their recreation club. No roster additions will be accepted after the team's first game. Exception: the player moves into the county after the roster deadline. Player must provide proof of residency and school starting date.
- D. Team rosters must be completed on a League Roster form and submitted with payment of team registration fees to the Parks and Recreation Department by the County-wide coaches meeting.
- E. Transfer of players during the season is prohibited.
- F. Any coach found to be using an ineligible player may be suspended from coaching for a period of one year. The suspension is applicable to any and all sports from the date formal action was taken.
- G. Coaches must consent to a background screening and be cleared to coach before he or she is allowed to coach a team during a practice or game.

III. Secondary Insurance

Secondary insurance provided by the league is mandatory for all participants. The league pays the premiums from the registration fees charged to each participant.

IV. Children Playing Up

Any recreation club wishing to move a player up into an older age division must start with the oldest players in the younger league. No child is required to play up if asked. Any child playing up must be cleared through the Parks and Recreation Department.

V. All-Play Rule

1. All players in attendance must play 3 outs in the field and complete one at-bat.
2. Coach Pitch – All players in attendance must be in the batting lineup.
3. 10U and 13U Teams - Teams will have the option of batting a continuous lineup (all kids in attendance are listed in the lineup) OR batting a “regular” lineup. IF a regular lineup is used, batting substitutions are mandatory after every player in the lineup has batted ONCE.
4. If a player gets sick or injured when using a continuous batting lineup, that player can be removed without the team being charged an out for her spot in the lineup; however, she cannot reenter the game.
5. Free substitutions on defense. Pitchers pulled can re-enter on defense anywhere except pitching.

VI. Mercy Rule

1. 10 runs after 3.5 innings or 15 runs after 3 innings.
2. Once a team is ahead by 8 or more runs, that team may only advance runners on a batted ball.
3. Failure to comply:
 1. First Occurrence - runner returns to the base and a warning
 2. Each Occurrence after the first will result in an out.
4. There will be a 5-run limit per inning. If a team is ahead by 5 or more runs when coming to bat, they may not send more than 9 batters to the plate in that inning.

VII. League Rules

- A. Before games begin, a maximum of two (2) practice sessions per week, at 2 hours per session may be held.
- B. A week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday.
- C. After games begin, one or two practice sessions per week, at 2 hours per session and one or two games are possible per week. A maximum of three events per week are permitted. A doubleheader will be considered one event.
- D. No umpires will be assigned to Coach Pitch games. One umpire will be assigned to 10U and 13U games.
- E. If any player is benched for disciplinary reasons, the opposing coach and the official scorekeeper must be notified prior to the start of the game.
- F. A team must have eight (8) players to play a game.
- G. Teams will be given ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time to produce the minimum number of players to begin the game. The 10-minute waiting period counts towards the time limit. After this waiting period, the game will be declared a forfeit.
- H. Each team must be supervised by a coach of at least 21 years of age at all times during practice and games.
 1. Only the head coach and two assistants will be allowed in the dugout during games. These coaches must be listed on the roster submitted to the league.
 2. Bat girls are not allowed.

3. One parent will be allowed to fill in as dugout coach should the third coach not be in attendance.
- I. No jewelry is to be worn during a game except for medical ID's or break-away necklaces. An ID should be secured to prevent injury to others.
- J. The Recreation Department will handle all makeup games.
 1. Games will only be rescheduled for school functions or inclement weather.
 2. The Recreation Department requires at least one week's notice in order to reschedule games caused by conflicts with school functions.
 3. Failure or refusal to play will result in a forfeit.
 4. No coaches are allowed to reschedule their games.
- K. Any game called early because of inclement weather or other act of God will be considered a complete game when:
 1. CP, 10U and 13U - when both teams have batted four times, or three times when the home team is leading.
 2. Tie games are allowed in all divisions where a score is kept, providing both teams have batted an equal number of times and the minimum number of innings has been played.
 3. Tie games will count as ½ a win for both teams.
 4. Games not meeting the minimum requirements will be resumed from the point of termination the next time the two teams play.
- L. Game cancellations will be made by 3pm on weekdays and 7:30am on weekends.
- M. Game schedules and league standings can be obtained at www.pittsylvaniacountyva.gov/recreation.

VIII. Game Play – Coach Pitch/8U

- A. General
 1. No score will be kept
 2. Maximum length of games will be one hour for doubleheaders and one hour fifteen minutes for single games. Any inning started should be completed.
 3. No infield fly.
 4. 60-foot base lengths.
 5. As a point of reference, pitchers will pitch from the bottom of the circle.
 6. An inning will end when the defensive team makes three outs or after the tenth offensive player in an inning has batted or the ball is declared dead.
 7. One base advancement allowed on overthrows.
 8. Any defensive player with the ball and standing on the toe plate will stop play. Any runners off of the base must return to the base she came from.
- B. Batting/Base Running
 1. All eligible players should be listed in the batting line-up for each game. Up to ten players may bat each inning or three outs, whichever comes first.
 2. Teams should exchange lineups 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. If a player in attendance is inadvertently left off the lineup card, the player is still eligible to play.
 3. Any player throwing a bat is automatically out.
 4. Each batter will be allowed five swings or five pitches. If after the fifth pitch a batter has not hit the ball in play, the batter will be declared out. If on the fifth pitch the batter fouls the ball off, the batter will receive additional pitches until she puts the ball in play.
 5. There are no walks or hit-by-pitch advancements.
- C. Defense
 1. A maximum of 10 defensive players are allowed on the field at a time. Positions are: pitcher, catcher, first, second, third base, shortstop and four outfielders. Outfielders should be placed at least five feet beyond the bases and base paths.
 2. Each player is required to play at least one (1) complete inning (3 outs) on defense. Free substitutions on defense.

3. If there is a child catcher, there must be a coach behind her to help retrieve passed balls and keep the game moving. The catcher must wear all required safety equipment.
- D. Coaches Participation
1. One coach will be allowed on the infield to assist as a defensive fielding coach.
 2. One offensive base coach is allowed in the coaching box and one coach is allowed in the home plate area to insure the batter is properly positioned in the batter's box.
 3. At no time can a coach physically assist a fielder or runner in their actions.
 4. The coach pitcher must deliver the ball to home plate in an underhanded motion.
 5. The coach pitcher must make every effort to avoid interfering with any ball put into play.
 6. A batted ball that hits the coach pitcher will be considered a live ball and play will continue.
 7. A thrown ball that hits the coach pitcher will be considered dead and runners will return to the base they came from.
 8. The coach pitcher should use discretion when receiving the ball from the catcher after a pitch and allow the player pitcher to receive the ball from the catcher as much as possible.

IX. Game Play – 10U

A. General

1. Maximum length of games will be 1.5 hours for single games at any site on any day and a STRICT 1 hour and 10-minute time limit for two games at any **UNLIT(i.e Middle School Fields)** site on a weekday (M-F). Due to the strict time limit for some weekday games, if a game is stopped in the middle of an inning, the final score will revert back to the last complete inning. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will end in a tie.
2. No new inning may begin after 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday during the school year. Suspended games will be completed the next time the two teams play.
3. Infield fly will be in effect.
4. 8' radius circle around the toe plate will be in effect.
5. 60-foot base lengths.
6. 35-foot pitching distance.
7. No metal cleats allowed.

B. Batting/Base Running

1. All eligible players should be listed on the line-up for each game. 10 players will comprise the batting order OR a team may choose a continuous batting lineup.
2. Teams should exchange lineups 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. If a player in attendance is inadvertently left off the lineup card, the player is still eligible to play.
3. Batter may not run on dropped third strike.
4. Leads are allowed once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
5. No stealing unless a wild pitch or passed ball comes to rest outside the "steal circle" around home plate.
6. On a pitched ball that does not leave the "steal circle", there is no advancement on overthrows to the pitcher.
7. When two outs, the catcher must have a courtesy runner.

C. Defense

1. A maximum of 10 defensive players are allowed on the field at a time.
2. Each player is required to play at least one (1) complete inning (3 outs) on defense. Free substitutions on defense.
3. All infielders must wear a protective mouth guard. Face mask is optional for every position but the pitcher. The pitcher must wear a face mask. If a face mask is worn, no mouth guard is required.

D. Pitching

1. There is no limit on pitching or innings pitched per week.

2. Coaches are allowed 2 visits to the mound per inning but on the 2nd visit in that inning the pitcher must be removed from the game and she cannot return to the mound during that game.
3. If the coach crosses the fair line to talk to the pitcher (even during warmups) it will count as a mound visit.
4. Per VHSL rules, any pitcher pulled that remains on the field in another position can reenter at pitcher once.

X. Game Play – 13U

A. General

1. Maximum length of games will be 1.5 hours for single games at any site on any day and a STRICT 1 hour and 10-minute time limit for two games at any **UNLIT(i.e. Middle School Fields)** site on a weekday (M-F). Due to the strict time limit for some weekday games, if a game is stopped in the middle of an inning, the final score will revert back to the last complete inning. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will end in a tie.
2. No new inning may begin after 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday during the school year. Suspended games will be completed the next time the two teams play.
3. Infield fly will be in effect.
4. 8' radius circle around the toe plate will be in effect.
5. 60-foot base lengths.
6. 40-foot pitching distance.
7. No metal cleats allowed.

B. Batting/Base Running

1. All eligible players should be listed on the line-up for each game. 10 players will comprise the batting order OR a team may choose a continuous batting lineup.
2. Teams should exchange lineups 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. If a player in attendance is inadvertently left off the lineup card, the player is still eligible to play.
3. Batter may run on dropped third strike.
4. Base stealing is allowed once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
5. The penalty for leaving the base early is that the runner will be called out.
6. All batting helmets must have facemasks.
7. When two outs, the catcher must have a courtesy runner.

C. Defense

1. A maximum of 9 defensive players are allowed on the field at a time.
2. Each player is required to play at least one (1) complete inning (3 outs) on defense. Free substitutions on defense.
3. All infielders must wear a protective mouth guard. Face mask is optional for every position but the pitcher, first baseman and third baseman. Those three positions on the infield must wear a face mask. If a face mask is worn, no mouth guard is required.
4. Catchers must wear appropriate equipment.

D. Pitching

1. There is no limit on pitching or innings pitched per week.
2. Coaches are allowed 2 visits to the mound per inning but on the 2nd visit in that inning the pitcher must be removed from the game and she cannot return to the mound during that game.
3. If the coach crosses the fair line to talk to the pitcher (even during warmups) it will count as a mound visit.
4. Per VHSL rules, any pitcher pulled that remains on the field in another position can reenter at pitcher once.

XI. Slide Rule

On any force play, the runner must slide on the ground before the base and in a direct line between the two bases. EXCEPTION – A runner need not slide directly into a base as long as the runner slides or runs in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. Interference shall not be called.

XII. Mandatory Speed-Up Rules

- A. When two outs, the pitcher is allowed to have a courtesy runner but this is optional and must be done before the first pitch to the next batter. The same player cannot be the courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher.
- B. Intentional Walks – coach will notify the umpire and the batter will be sent to first. No pitches will be thrown.

XIII. Player or Coach Misconduct

Player or coach misconduct will be considered on a case-by-case basis with possible disciplinary actions of probation, game suspensions or season suspensions. If a player or coach is ejected from a game, he must leave the field immediately. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit.

XIV. Tiebreaker Policy

- A. Overall win/loss record will determine league champion. In the event of a tie, the following tiebreakers will determine the division champion:
 - 1. Head to head.
 - 2. Run differential
 - 3. Fewest runs allowed.

XV. Protest

The softball league will adhere to the VHSL rule regarding protests which states that there shall be no game protests with the exception of ineligible players.

XVI. Player Suspension from School

Any player suspended from school will not be permitted to practice or play once the child has been notified of the suspension and cannot return until the day he/she returns to school.

- 1. The player is responsible for notifying the head coach. Failing to notify the head coach OR the head coach choosing to play the suspended player despite the suspension will result in a player and/or coach suspension determined by the league.
- 2. This is applicable for all practice and game sites.

XVII. Lightning Policy (per NFHS)

- When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately. Avoid all metallic objects like bleachers, fencing, flag poles, etc.
- Observe the thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- In Pittsylvania County, the site supervisor will make the final determination of game status.