

2023 Tri-City Youth Fast-Pitch Softball Rules

1. MEMBERSHIPS:

A. Ponytail Division (8-9 year olds)

Includes all female players who have not attained the age of 10 years old prior to September 1st of the current year.

B. Petite Division (10-14 year olds)

Includes all female players who have not attained the age of 13 years old prior to September 1st of the current year.

2. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS, MANAGERS, AND COACHES:

A. All players, managers and coaches must be registered through the recreation office sponsoring the team.

B. Team rosters may fluctuate, depending on player registration.

C. The coaching staff will consist of a manager and a maximum of 2 coaches who must be approved by the Recreation Department sponsoring the team prior to working with the participants in **any manner at practice or games.**

D. All coaches must have a “**Background**” check prior to being authorized to coach the youth participants.

E. **Only registered players** of a team are eligible to participate in any practice and/or game in the Tri-City. Using non-rostered players will result in the manager being suspended for the next game or possibly dismissed for the remainder of the season and will also result in a forfeit for the team.

F. **NO TOLERANCE FOR ANY** unsportsmanlike conduct, profane language, verbal abuse, or physical abuse towards any umpire, staff or coaches will be tolerated from any player, parent, spectator and/or coach. Offender may be ejected from a game and will be suspended for the next game. With two (2) ejections for a coach or player will then be suspended from the league.

If actions are severe enough, the police will be called, charges will be pursued if necessary and the offending team will forfeit the game.

G. **NO TOBACCO OR ALCOHOL PRODUCTS** may be used or present within the playing field, dugout, warm up areas and/or practice areas.

3. VERIFICATION OF AGE:

A. The word of a player’s parent or legal guardian will be accepted, unless it is challenged. The league directors reserve the right to request a birth certificate, a suitable copy, or any other legal transcript that the director approved for verification.

4. GENERAL PLAYING RULES:

A. All league games will be governed by the rules compiled by the Illinois High School Association, with the only changes or exception with special league rules modifications applying to your division adopted by the League Directors.

B. The LAST number in the pairing of the official league schedule will be HOME team and occupy the third base dugout.

C. **Game time is forfeit time.** Teams may start a game providing they have 7 registered players at game time. Teams with fewer than 7 at game time will **be scored as a forfeit. The game will still be played. No outs will be given if a team is playing with 7 or 8 players.**

D. Each manager must provide a starting line-up to the umpire. The umpire will record scores by innings and will be considered the OFFICIAL SCORER. **At the end of the game both coaches must sign the score card.**

E. Teams must bat their entire roster. All players that arrive for a league game late must be added to the bottom of their team's batting order. **If a player is injured or disqualified the team is not penalized by an out when the player's turn is up to bat.**

F. Injured players may be skipped over in the batting order without penalty. The coach must inform the umpire that an injured player is being skipped before that injured player is skipped.

G. A regulation game shall consist of 7 innings or appropriate time limit for division. An official game will be 3 ½ innings (with home team ahead) or 4 innings (visiting team ahead). This applies to games called for darkness, time limit, and/or poor weather conditions.

H. TIME LIMIT: The Ponytail will have a 1 hour & 15 minute time limit while Petite & Chic will have a 1 hour & 30 minute time limit. The team leading will be the winner. If the game is tied after the time limit has expired the game will officially be recorded as a tie.

I. All games that are not yet an official game but are stopped due to poor weather conditions will be considered SUSPENDED, and will be finished from the point of interruption. All suspended games will be played as soon as possible. Teams may add to the bottom of their line-up any registered players who were not available for the original game. Also, players who are not available for make-up games will be skipped over in the line-up WITHOUT PENALTY. The time limit will be carried over to the make up game.

J. All registered players participating MUST play at least 2 innings in the field. (Exception: if the game is called for weather conditions)

K. FREE SUBSTITUTION rule applies for all teams defensively. Players may rotate in and out, without penalty. Batting order always remains the same.

L. Managers receive 3 defensive conferences (per game). Two defensive conferences within the same inning, the pitcher has to be replaced. After 3 conferences have been used, the pitcher has to be replaced with each conference. If replacing a pitcher, no conference is charged.

M. NO written or verbal protest will be accepted by the Tri-City league. Any problems or complaints should be directed to your sponsoring recreation department and recreation department hosting that game.

N. ALL softball participants required to have a batting **helmet with face guard** attached, when they're batting and/or on deck, **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

O. NO shoes with metal spikes may be worn. Any player in violation of this rule will be immediately **disqualified from the game.**

P. HEAT RULE – Anything above 95* heat index will result in reducing game times by 15 minutes.

Q. Lightning– **Must wait 30 minutes from the most recent lightning strike before the game can continue.**

R. STANDINGS – will be determined by the following criteria: **In case of a tie, the championship will be resolved by comparing won-loss records against each other in the regular season. If there is still a tie, the champion will be decided by total runs scored in head-to-head competition. If these are equal, total runs allowed for the regular season will be used.** Standings will be kept in all divisions ages 8 and up.

5. PONYTAIL DIVISION SPECIAL PLAYING RULES:

A. Ponytail Division will use the **11" softball**. Games will be played with the dimple balls. These balls make it more consistent for the batter.

B. Ponytail division pitching machine set at 35' with dial set at 35 on Jugs Jr machine , and bases are 60'.

C. Games consist of **7 innings or 1 hour 15 minutes time limit. No new inning will be started after 1 hour 5 minutes has been played. Game officially starts on the first pitch.** Pitching machine used for this division, which will have a circle around the machine designating a dead ball area. **NO** player may enter the circle to play the ball. Any ball striking the machine or umpire operating the machine **DEADBALL** will be called and *the batter is awarded first base. Other base runners will only advance one base if forced.*

D. 10 players will play defense, which results with 4 outfielders. All outfields must start in the outfield area at the time of the pitch.

E. Pitchers must start on the pitching mark at 40' at the time of the pitch.

F. NO walks for the batter. Each batter gets three strikes per out or 5 pitches, whichever comes first. Batters are NOT out for foul ball on strike three, unless the foul tip goes directly into the catcher's glove and is caught, *or it is the 5th pitch*. Batters may NOT run on dropped third strikes. NO bunting allowed in these divisions.

G. NO lead offs or stealing bases. Runners must remain on the base until the batter swings at the pitch.

H. Maximum of 5 runs scored per inning or 3 outs for the first three full innings, teams must get three outs from the fourth inning on. NO 10 run rule or extra innings.

I. When the pitcher has the ball and does not attempt to make a play on the base runner, **ALL base runners MUST immediately** make a decision to either advance without any hesitation or retreat to their base. If they fail to do this, runners in violation will be called out.

J. Mandatory to courtesy run for any catcher on base with the previous batter NOT on base. This is to help keep the catchers ready and game moving.

K. Standings will be kept in the Ponytail Division.

L. NO COACHES are allowed on the playing field unless their team is batting and they are coaching a base.

M. In the case of an overthrow, the base runner can *advance at their own risk, but only one base*. **They can only advance to home if it is forced, if not forced, the runner must remain at 3rd.**

N. Catcher position is optional. Teams can play 10 with a catcher or 9 with no catcher. **In the case of no catcher, the pitcher will be responsible for any plays at home.**

6. PETITE DIVISION SPECIAL PLAYING RULES:

A. Division will use the 11" softball.

B. Petite division: pitching mound 38', bases 60'.

C. Games consist of 7 innings or 1 hour 30 minutes. **After 1 hour and 20 minutes no new inning may start.**

D. Runners must remain on the base until the pitcher releases the pitch. Players **may steal only ONE base (2nd & 3rd) per pitch**. Then can not advance to additional base for any reason (i.e. bad throw on the steal attempt).

E. NO stealing bases if the team is winning by 10 or more runs, this includes pass balls.

F. NO stealing home. This includes a passed ball from the catcher, wild pitch, play made by the pitcher and/or catcher on any runner. Runner may only advance on a batted and/or bunted ball, or walk which forces the runner to advance.

G. The batter is automatically out on all dropped third strikes.

H. Maximum of 5 runs scored per inning or 3 outs for the first three full innings, teams must get three outs from the fourth inning on. **NO new inning will be started with less than 10 minutes** to go in the time limit. NO 10 run rule or extra innings.

I. Pitching circle for pitchers. When the pitcher has the ball within the circle and does not attempt to make a play on the base runner, **ALL base runners MUST immediately** make a decision to either advance without any hesitation or retreat to their base. If they fail to do this, runners in violation will be called out.

J. Mandatory to courtesy run for any catcher on base with the previous batter NOT on base. This is to help keep the catchers ready and game moving.

K. NO COACHES are allowed on the playing field unless their team is batting and they are coaching a base.

L. 10 players will play defense, which results with 4 outfielders. All outfields must start in the outfield area at the time of the pitch.

8. PITCHING / BASE MEASUREMENTS:

- A. Ponytail Division – machine set at 35', circle 8', bases 60'
- B. Petite Division – pitching mound at 38', circle 16', bases 60'

9. SAFETY / INTEGRITY OF THE LEAGUE:

Tri-City League Officials reserves the right to remove and/or suspend ANY player, parent, coach, spectator or manager from the league and/or participating parks for any reason or rule violation that jeopardizes the safety and well being of participants, spectators, and/or park staff.