

# Official PHBA Rules

## Softball

2019 Edition





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**Umpire Leadership Team**

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- **Final decisions on rules interpretations, violations and consequences are in the purview of the Head Commissioner, League Commissioners, Chief Umpire and Umpire Crew Chiefs for each Division.**
- **Rules specific to a division are noted at the beginning of the rule with the following abbreviations**
  - **GW - Girls Western**
  - **GN – Girls National**
  - **GA – Girls American**
  - **GP – Girls Pioneer**
- **To maintain continuity with the PHBA 2019 Baseball Rules, Section 1.02 and 4.07 have been deliberately left out of these rules.**

# Foreword

The league was established in 1958 as an organization formed to provide a program for the youth of the Pleasant Hill area in cooperation with the Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District, the Mt. Diablo Unified School District and Diablo Valley College.

## ***Purpose***

The purpose of this association shall be to promote, equip, govern and sponsor baseball and softball as played by youth 4 years of age and over using the doctrine of Positive Coaching.

## ***Goals and Objectives***

Enjoyment of the game shall be the basic goal of all participants and all efforts will be directed toward having each member of each team play baseball or softball. Coaches shall strive to be positive coaches by putting athletes first, teach character and foster self-motivation. Coaches shall also coach for mastery and refuse to use fear or intimidation while developing a partnership with each participant. Honor and respect of the game shall be paramount while an emphasis on winning shall be minimized.

## ***Player's Code***

- I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Player's Code of Ethics Pledge
- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun!
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.
- I will do my very best in school.
- I will remember that sports is an opportunity to learn and have fun.

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USA SOFTBALL, 2019 Youth Fast Pitch, Rules will apply with the following exceptions and/or clarifications:

## **1.0 – The Playing Field**

### **1.01 – Field Layout**

Official Diamond dimensions for each Division are as follows

- (a) GW, GN, GA: Bases – 60 Feet, the double base will be used at first
- (b) GP: Bases – 55 Feet, the double base will be used at first

### **1.03 – Pitching Plates/Circles**

- (a) GW: A circle, 16 feet in diameter, will be marked around the center of the pitching plate 43 feet from the rear tip of home plate
- (b) GN: A circle, 16 feet in diameter, will be marked around the center of the pitching plate 40 feet from the rear tip of home plate
- (c) GA: A circle, 16 feet in diameter, will be marked around the center of the pitching plate 35 feet from the rear tip of home plate
- (d) GP: A circle, 16 feet in diameter, will be marked around the center of the pitching plate 30 feet from the rear tip of home plate

## **2.0 – Equipment and Uniforms**

### **2.01 – Balls**

- (a) All Divisions: Only softballs provided by PHBA on Equipment Day will be used as game balls

### **2.02 – Bats**

- (a) All Divisions: Bats must conform to current ASA certification guidelines as stated in USA Softball Official Rules of Softball.

### **2.03 – Cleats**

- (a) GW: Rubber cleats or steel spikes may be used by any player
- (b) GN, GA, GP: No player shall be allowed to play with steel spikes. Rubber cleats may be used

### **2.04 – Masks**

- (a) GW, GN, GA: All pitchers must wear face masks

### **2.05 – Helmets**

- (a) All divisions: All batters must wear batting helmets with face protection. Personal helmets will NOT be allowed if they do not have commercially available face protective devices installed.

### **3.0 – Game Preliminaries**

#### **3.01 – Home Team/Lineup Card**

- (a) All Divisions: One Team will be designated the HOME TEAM for each game. Both HOME and VISITING TEAMS are responsible for the preparation of the field. Each team will be scheduled as the HOME TEAM approximately one half of the games so no team has an undue advantage. The HOME TEAM will occupy the third base dugout; the VISITING TEAM will occupy the first base dugout. The VISITING TEAM will practice first.
- (b) All Divisions: Each team must have a printed lineup at every game showing each player's defensive position by inning in order to verify that each player is playing per Rule 4.02(a)(b)(c).

#### **3.02 – Pre-Game Field Practice**

- (a) All Divisions: No practice on dragged fields until twenty minutes before game time. Each team is allowed ten minutes practice prior to the start of the game (time permitting). In the event the field is not ready twenty minutes before the game, practice time available will be equally split between the two teams.

#### **3.03 – Team Rosters**

- (a) All Divisions: The team roster for all teams will be set on Roster Night. Players will be removed from the roster for the following reasons:
- Player experiences a season ending injury
  - Player becomes automatically ineligible when he/she participates in another league during the PHBA season
  - Player moves out of town
  - Player officially quits in writing for personal matters
  - Player is removed from the league for disciplinary reasons.

Extra/Late Sign-up/New players after Roster Night will be placed on a league waiting list as replacement players, and will enter the league on a first registered/first opening basis. Replacement players can only be added to team rosters from the waiting list by approval of the Head Commissioner or his/her designee.

#### **3.04 – Field Specific Rules**

- (a) GN, GW: For all games played at the College Park fields (Saturday Nights – 3:00pm, 5:30pm and 8:00pm), there will be a strict time limit. Games will end at the

completion of six (6) innings or 5:15pm, 7:45 pm or 10:20pm whichever occurs first. This rule supersedes Rule 6.09(a) as it applies to the two (2) hour limit. To determine the winner of the game at the end of the time limit, refer to Rule 6.05(a).

### **3.05 – Badges**

- (a) All Divisions: Only Manager, Coaches and team parent volunteers with PHBA ID badges (must have badge on person) and players are permitted in the dugout or on the playing field. **No exceptions.**

### **3.06 – Dugout Rules**

- (a) All Divisions: Girls All team members, Managers and Coaches must be in the dugout area. The only exceptions are the hitter, the on-deck player, and the two base line coaches. Absolutely no swinging of bats outside the on-deck circle or the batter's box is allowed. The batter and on-deck player must wear helmets and remain in their appropriate designated areas. Hitting sticks are not allowed within the fence lines of the field. If a coach wants to warm up the (in the hole) batter, it must be outside the fenced area. Note, these are public areas and there will be a lot of kids and parents walking around.

### **3.07 – Alcoholic Beverages/Smoking**

- (a) All Divisions: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES & SMOKING OF ANY KIND ARE NOT ALLOWED in the playing or spectator area. Smoking, Vaping and/or chewing tobacco by a Manager, Coach or Players are not allowed during practice or a game.

## **4.0 – Playing the Game**

### **4.01 – Starting the Game**

- (a) All Divisions: The Umpire shall call "Batter-up" after the pitcher has pitched five (5) warm-up pitches. New or starting pitchers may take up to ten (10) warm-up pitches not to exceed one minute.

### **4.02 – Player Participation**

- (a) All Divisions: Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings, six (6) defensive outs, within the first four (4) innings of each game. The manager will bat every player present (whether playing defensively or not), through the complete roster, in every game. The following section applies for teams that field thirteen (13) or less players for the game. In the event that the game progresses beyond four (4) innings, each player will play a minimum of three (3) innings in the first five (5) innings and four (4) innings in the first six (6) innings. The number of innings played may be reduced only by an incidence of player's late arrival, or leaving early. A late arriving player will play in half the innings that the player attends



- (b)** GW: Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning for GW (three (3) defensive outs) in the infield during the first four (4) innings
- (c)** GN, GA, GP: Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings for GN, GA, and GP, (six (6) defensive outs), in the infield during the first four (4) innings.
- (d)** All Divisions: Outfielders and rover (optional) must stay out of the infield area with at least one foot on the edge of the grass. Pitcher and catcher positions must be filled at all times.
- (e)** All Divisions: Any player removed from the game by their Manager may re-enter during a natural break in play as approved by the home plate umpire.

#### **4.03 – Players/Batting Order**

- (a)** All Divisions: Players must remain in the same batting order during the entire game.

#### **4.04 – Dropped Third Strike**

- (a)** GW, GN, GA: Dropped third strike does apply
- (b)** GP: Dropped third strike does not apply

#### **4.05 – Coach Pitch**

**Editor’s note – This rule varies slightly from PHBA Baseball rule 4.05)**

- (a)** GP: After four (4) balls, the manager or his/her designated coach representative pitches for the balance of the count (i.e Count equals 4-1, coach has two (2) strikes to make.) The coach/pitcher will throw no more than three (3) pitches with the umpire calling balls/strikes. No walks are allowed. The foul ball rule applies, i.e on the third strike, if a batter safely fouls the pitch the batter will remain at bat for another pitch.
  - (1)** The manager of the team at bat or his/her designated coach shall pitch to his/her own team.
  - (2)** It is the responsibility of the coach to say out of the way of the defense. However, if the coach is hit by the ball, the ball is live and play will continue.
  - (3)** A defensive player must be in the pitching circle when the coach is pitching.
  - (4)** Coach pitching must be underhand from the pitching rubber.
  - (5)** A batter hit by a pitched ball from the coach or designated adult representative will NOT be awarded first base.
- (b)** GP: A batter hit by a pitched ball (except when pitch is in the strike zone or pitched by a coach pitcher) will have the option of taking first base or continuing their at bat.

#### **4.06 – Bunting**

- (a)** GW, GN, GA: Bunting is allowed
- (b)** GP: Bunting is **NOT** allowed. If a batter, in the judgement of the Umpire, intentionally bunts a ball, the batter will be called out.

#### **4.08 – Leading Off/Stealing/Running the Bases**

- (a)** GW, GN, GA: Runner's may not lead off. Runners may steal once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If the runner leaves the base before the pitcher releases the ball, the runner will be called out.
- (b)** GA: On a walk (four (4) balls), NO turn and burn at 1B will be allowed.
- (c)** GP: Stealing is NOT allowed
- (d)** GP: Runners may NOT lead off. If a runner leaves a base before the ball crosses home plate they will be called out:
- (e)** GP: A runner may score from third base only on a batted ball. Said runner cannot score on a throw from the catcher to the pitcher or an overthrow to a base.  
EXCEPTION: Batter hit by pitch with bases loaded advances to first base and runner scores from third base.

#### **4.09 – Catchers/Home Plate**

- (a)** All Divisions: Girls – The catcher must leave an avenue to the plate for the runner during a play at home unless in possession of the ball or in the act of receiving the ball. (See Rule 5.1)

#### **4.10 – Sliding**

- (a)** GW: HEAD FIRST slides are allowed
- (b)** GN, GA, GP: Sliding is allowed however HEAD FIRST slides are NOT allowed except when a runner is returning to a previously occupied base. If a runner slides head first, other than when returning to a base, the runner will be called out.

#### **4.11 – Advancing on Overthrow**

**Editor's note – The following rule, (a)1,2,3,4 applies to a batted ball.**

- (a)** GP: When a play is made on a runner at a base and the ball goes into the field of play past the infielder where the play is being made, the runners may not advance past third base.
  - (1)** Clarification – An overthrow is a failed throw or attempt to make a play to any base, including home plate

**(2)** An overthrow does NOT include missing a cut-off man or attempts to throw back to the pitcher. In those situations, runners may advance at their own risk until either an overthrow is made on a play to a base, or the pitcher controls the ball in the pitcher's circle.

**(3)** Runners may advance ONE base on a thrown ball into out-of-play areas (Past the first and third base fence lines. Except in Rule 4.11(a)(4)

**(4)** Runners may only score from third base on a batted ball or bases loaded hit batter. No runner may score from third on an overthrow or a throw out-of-play.

- (b)** GA: On a non-batted ball, a runner may advance either  
1 base from the base they currently occupy – or  
1 base from the base at which a play is made.

A non-batted ball is defined as a ball thrown back to the pitcher from the catcher, a thrown ball to a base in attempt to put out a runner attempting to steal.

On a batted ball, play will continue normally until its natural conclusion or until stopped by the pitcher having possession of the ball with at least one foot inside the pitching circle

#### **4.12 - Pitching**

- (a)** GW, GN: Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of two (2)(GN) or three (3)(GW) innings in any one game. Once one (1) pitch is made in an inning, it counts as an inning pitched for that pitcher. During the playoffs, the maximum will increase to three (3)(GN) or four (4)(GW) innings.
- (b)** GA, GP: Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of two (2) innings in any one game. Once one pitch is made in an inning, it counts as an "inning pitched" for that pitcher.
- (c)** All Divisions: All pitchers must pitch in a windmill fashion. If the windmill motion is not employed, the pitch will be called a ball unless successfully put in play, in which case it is the offensive manager's option to take the play or the called ball.
- (d)** All Divisions: Pitcher must start with both feet on the pitching rubber.
- (e)** All Divisions: Any player warming up a pitcher, regardless of location, must wear a Catcher's mask.
- (f)** All Divisions: Pitching changes can be made at any time except in the middle of a player's at bat, or in case of injury.

#### **4.13 – Runs Per Inning**

- (a) GW, GN, GA: There will be three runs maximum per team per inning through the fourth inning. The number of runs in the fifth and sixth innings is unlimited. In the first four innings, the batter, any baserunners and the fielders should play any batted ball to the natural conclusion of the play, even when it appears that the third and final allowable run for that inning will score before the natural conclusion. There is one exception to the maximum runs rule: for any batted ball hit over the outfield fence for a home run, all runs scored on that home run will be counted in the game score. If the home run fence is not in use, this exception does not apply
- (b) GP: There will be three runs maximum per team per inning through the third inning. The number of runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings is unlimited. In the limited run innings, the batter, any baserunners and the fielders should play any batted ball to the natural conclusion of the play, even when it appears that the final allowable run for that inning will score before the natural conclusion.

#### **4.14 – Infield Fly**

- (a) GW, GN: Infield fly rule does apply
- (b) GA, GP: Infield fly rule does not apply

### **5.0 – IMPROPER BEHAVIOR, MISCONDUCT, AND EJECTIONS**

#### **5.01 – Intentional Contact**

- (a) All Divisions: When a defensive player is attempting to make a play on a runner at any base including home, unless the runner is sliding, the runner will be called out if they intentionally collide with the defensive player. (See Rule 4.9)

#### **5.02 – Distracting Behavior**

- (a) All Divisions: No fielder shall take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter. PENALTY: the offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if an illegal pitch is made, it shall be nullified.

#### **5.03 – Backstop Behavior**

- (a) All Divisions: No one may stand behind the backstop unless bleachers are positioned there. Coaches standing behind the backstop may be ejected by the umpire.

#### **5.04 – Misconduct**

- (a) All Divisions: No Manager, Player, Substitute, Coach or Batboy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere

- (1)** Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators;
- (2)** Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire, or any spectator;
- (3)** Call "Time", or employ any word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is live and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the Pitcher commit an illegal pitch.
- (4)** Make intentional contact with the Umpire in any manner;
- (5)** Rule 5.04(a)1,2,3,4 are subject to immediate Ejection by the Umpire.

## **5.05 – Ejections**

- (a)** All Divisions: Ejection: Either physical or verbal alterations will result in an automatic ejection from the game. This includes Player, Managers, Coaches and spectators. Any ejected person must leave the area before resumption of the game is permitted. ALL PLAYERS MANAGERS AND COACHES will be subject to the PHBA Code of Conduct. Any Player, Manager or Coach ejected from a game by the Umpire may face further disciplinary action to be determined by the League Commissioner and Head Commissioner that may affect their standing in future games. Additional sanctions may be imposed at the discretion of PHBA. Umpires will provide the Umpire Crew Chief for that division with written documentation outlining the reason for the ejection within 24 hours of the end of the game. Any Player, Manager or Coach ejected for a second time in a season will face further disciplinary action to be determined by the league Commissioner and Head Commissioner that may affect their standing in future games. The PHBA Board of Commissioners will review all suspensions and any appeals to a suspension.

## **6.0 – ENDING THE GAME**

### **6.01 – Game Length**

- (a)** All Divisions: Six (6) innings shall constitute a regular game. If after three (3) innings the game must be called, it will go on record as a complete game (2 ½ innings if the HOME TEAM is ahead).

### **6.02 – Ties**

- (a)** All Divisions: If after six (6) innings, the game is tied, the game will continue until a winner is determined, time permitting (see Rule 6.09(a)). If a tie game must be called, it will be counted a half of a win.

### **6.03 – Slaughter Rule**

- (a)** All Divisions: If a team is ten (10) runs ahead at the end of the fifth inning, the game will be called.

## 6.04 – Inning Surrender

- (a) GW, GN, GA: Each Manager may decide to end their offensive half of an inning if they choose by notifying the umpires that they will surrender the remainder of their at bats for the inning. At that point the half inning is over and the other team will come up to bat. **This is only allowable in unlimited run innings (fifth, sixth and seventh).** If the team that surrenders their inning comes up again, the batting order must start exactly where it was left off before so that **no batters are skipped.**

## 6.05 – Calling a Game/Unsafe Conditions

- (a) All Divisions: Umpire's may call a game at any time because of any unsafe playing conditions such as, but not limited to, darkness, foul weather and rain. Through the last Sunday in April, Umpire(s) must call the game for darkness ten (10) minutes after the published sundown time for Pleasant Hill (posted on the PHBA Website). If a game is called before any full inning is completed, the score reverts to the last full inning. No consideration to the score will be given by the Umpire(s) in determining whether to call a game. When the Umpire(s) call a game the game will immediately stop and the score will revert to the end of the previous full inning. For purposes of this rule, the last "full inning" and the previous "full inning" are defined as the last inning in which the Visiting Team has completed its turn at bat with three (3) outs and the Home Team has either completed its turn at bat with three (3) outs or the Home Team is at bat and either tied or is leading in runs scored, regardless of the number of outs. There are three (3) possible scenarios.

(1) If a game is called in accordance with Rule 6.05(a) and the Visiting Team is still at bat, the score will revert back to the score at the end of the prior inning.

(2) If a game is called in accordance with Rule 6.05(a) and the Home Team is at bat with less the three (3) outs, and the Home Team is behind in runs scored, the score will revert back to the score at the end of the prior inning. If the Home team has tied the score after being behind the previous inning, the game will be scored a TIE. The score will revert back to the score at the end of the prior inning in any other scenario except Rule 6.05(a)3.

(3) If the game is called in accordance with Rule 6.05(a) and the Home Team is at bat and is leading in runs scored, the score will be the current score and the Home Team will be declared the winner.

## 6.06 – Game Rescheduling

- (a) All Divisions: No game will be rescheduled, except for bad weather or unsafe playing condition. All proposed rescheduling must be approved in advance by the League Commissioner. Rain outs are a tie if not rescheduled. Games not played due to weather will be rescheduled at the discretion of the League Commissioner.

## 6.07 – Incomplete Game

- (a) All Divisions: A game called under Rule 6.05(a) that is not yet a complete game under Rule 6.01(a) will be rescheduled to the extent possible under Rule 6.06(a). A rescheduled game will resume at the point that the game was called and will continue until it qualifies as a complete game, ie, three (3) inning completed; 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead. The batting order, pitchers and pitch counts will carry over to the resumed game.

## **6.08 – Team Minimums**

- (a) All Divisions: Each Team must have a minimum of six (6) players throughout the entire game or forfeit.

## **6.09 – Game Time Limits**

- (a) All Divisions: All games will have a two (2) hour time limit, 1 ½ for GP. All weekday games begin at the scheduled time. A new inning begins immediately following the third out. No new inning will start after two (2) hours of play (1 ½ for GP) for any/all games (including weekend games). Once a new inning is started within the two (2) hour time limit, the inning will be played to completion, unless called in accordance with Rule 6.05(a). The two (2) hour limit (1 ½ for GP) pertains to starting a new inning, not finishing the inning once it has been started
- (b) All Divisions: All forfeiture times are ten (10) minutes after starting game time. Umpire's time is considered official.

## **6.10 – Protests**

- (a) All Divisions: Protest may be entered on the interpretations of the rules or the illegal use of players. There can be no protest over a judgement call of the Umpire.
- (b) All Divisions: PROTEST PROCEDURE: The protesting Manager shall immediately notify the Umpire, before another ball is pitched or any succeeding play begins, that the game is being played under protest. The Umpire will then notify the opposing Manager and both scorekeepers. The protest (in writing from the protesting Manager) must be delivered to the Commissioner of that league within 48 hours of the game's end. Violation of this procedure voids the protest. A \$20.00 fee must be included with the formal protest and will be returned only if the protest is allowed.

## **7.0 – Judgement Calls**

### **7.01 – Umpire**

- (a) All Divisions: Managers, Coaches or Players cannot dispute any judgement call by the Umpire (i.e. balls, strikes etc). Disputing a judgement call may result in an ejection from the game.

## **8 – Scorekeeping**

### **8.01 – Official Scorekeeper**

- (a)** All Divisions: Home Team supplies the “Official” scorekeeper. Visiting Team supplies an additional scorekeeper. Each Manager must present to the opposing scorekeeper a completed lineup card prior to the beginning of the game. After each inning, Visiting Team scorekeeper will check with the Home Team scorekeeper for the correct score. Disagreements will be resolved by the umpire.

### **8.02 – Scorebook Audits**

- (a)** All Divisions: All scorebooks are subject to audit by the League Commissioner at any time.

### **8.03 – Posting Game Scores**

- (a)** All Divisions: Both team managers are responsible for posting the game score on the league website within 24 hours.