

AHYAA_PBA_PH Combined 12" Fast Pitch Softball Rules



General Rules

- 1) These rules apply to all three towns Arlington Heights, Palatine, and Prospect Heights for fast pitch softball:
 - a) Varsity / Jr. High (grades: 7th or 8th)
- 2) The following abbreviations will be used to indicate town specific situations.
 - a) Arlington Heights = AH
 - b) Palatine = Pal
 - c) Prospect Heights = PH
- 3) The only players permitted to play and practice are those who have registered with a park district and or the affiliate recreation program by paying the appropriate fee. Players may be registered in multiple leagues (including travel) as long as they are registered in this league(s) and pay the appropriate fee.
- 4) The spirit of the game is to follow the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) rules as close as possible. If there are any specific ground rules that need to be decided, they must be discussed and resolved with the umpire before the start of the game. It is the responsibility of both managers to make sure they are in agreement in the presence of the umpire to ensure clarification of rules. The umpire is requested to abide by pre game discussions.
- 5) Good sportsmanship should be utilized for every aspect of the game. The managers should emphasize this with their teams. Cheering or comments by the team or fans must not be detrimental to the other team. Managers are responsible for the behavior of their team and fans and can be ejected if they are not controlled. All managers must read these rules and review them with the players and coaches of their team at the beginning of the season. Affiliate incident report must be submitted to the commissioner if there is any issue with fans, coaches, or umpires.
- 6) The home team is responsible for setting up the playing field at least 30 minutes before a game is to start. Before game infield practice should be split evenly between the teams. Normally the visiting team would practice on the infield for 10 minutes from 15 minutes before game time to 5 minutes before game time. The home team would take the infield for their 10 minutes from 25 minutes before game time to 15 minutes before game time. Weather conditions or completion of a previous game may not allow for this. Take down of the field is also the responsibility of the home team. The home team must also supply game balls with at least 1 being new. The home team keeps the game balls at the end of the game. Home team uses the third base dugout.
- 7) If the field is unplayable, the home team must notify the visiting team manager by talking to someone in a coaching capacity at least one and one half (1 1/2) hours before scheduled game time and getting confirmation. Leaving a voice mail or sending an email without confirmation is not sufficient notice.

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Notifying the umpire is also the responsibility of the home team through the league commissioner. Rescheduling games are the responsibility of the home team. If these are not rescheduled timely then the league commissioner may schedule the game. For make-up games it is recommended the home manager contact the opposing manager to confirm location and time of the make-up game a couple of days before it is to be replayed.

- 8) The manager/coach may decide to use substitute players during the game or any part of the game if he does not have 9 players able to play or will fall below 9 players during a game. Those players must be registered in any of the recreational programs in the park districts/or villages. They must play an equal amount of time as the rest of the team in the field as well as bat within the batting order. It is encouraged that players be used from the younger level but they could be from the same age level. They could even be pulled from an opposing team with agreement from both managers. Replacement players must wear the uniform of the team to which they are registered. Replacement players should not start the game ahead of roistered players and they should bat last.
 - a) Varsity - Jr. High: Replacement players may play any position except pitcher and catcher. At no time should a replacement player play any position for more than 2 innings.
- 9) Both teams must have at least 6 players including replacements to start the game. If they do not within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time then the game is a forfeit. If during the course of game play the number of available players drops below 6 then play must stop. If a team that has less than 9 players decides to stop play then the other team will be declared the winner. If a team plays with fewer than 9 players then those missing positions in the batting order are not automatically an out. If a forfeit is declared then allow the umpire to leave if he/she desires. If the managers want to have a practice game then decide up front how long or how many innings will be played.
 - a) It is up to the discretion of the agreement of the managers in the presence of the umpire to start the game with shared players from the opposing team.
- 10) Players are to be given equal defensive playing time as much as possible. No player sits out a second inning until everyone sits out one inning with the exception of a pitcher pitching in consecutive innings.
 - a) All players must play a minimum of 2 innings in an infield position, and 2 innings in an outfield or catcher position.
- 11) Each team bats its full roster of available players including replacements. Players that show up after the game has started are placed at the end of the original batting order. Players that leave during the game are skipped in the batting order from then on without penalty.
- 12) Games are typically scheduled with 2 or more hours between games. Teams must abide by the following considerations:
 - a) Prior to Memorial day, no new inning can start after 7:45pm if the game is being played on an unlit field. All other league games, have a 2 hour time limit. This means no new inning can start once this limit is reached. Game start time is when the first pitch is thrown, which may or may not be it's scheduled start time (2017 updated).

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- b) In a regular season game where the next game is scheduled to start 2 hours or more after the scheduled start of your game, your game ends automatically 10 minutes prior to the start of the next game (immediate play stop). Teams must immediately vacate the field and dugouts so the next team can get ready to play. Game outcome shall be determined by the score at the last completed inning (2017 updated).
 - c) It is suggested that if teams are approaching game time limit, last inning be declared prior to the start of said inning. Permitting last inning run rules to take effect. This inning must still abide by the above mentioned time limits. If play stops during last inning due to a time limit, the outcome of the game is determined by the score at the last completed inning.
 - d) Playoff & championship games. A playoff game must enter last inning rules if the game time limit is close or reached. Such games shall never revert back for scoring; always finish the inning in progress. Such games which end in a tie shall go to international tie breaker rules regardless of game time limit. A playoff game maintains rights to the field until conclusion, regardless of start time for any following game (2017 updated).
- 13) AH Only: AH does not permit anyone to be behind the backstop during the game. If the game is at an AH field, no one may stand or sit behind home plate.
- 14) If there is no umpire to start the game, then the managers should play the game with volunteer umpires. The managers need to agree to the method (using fan, coaches, one coach or manager to be the umpire). The intent is to do everything possible to play the game at the scheduled time.
- a) If the umpire is not there at game time or later than 15 minutes, an incident report must be filled out and reported to your league commissioner.
- 15) Once the umpire takes control of the field, he/she is responsible for halting the game due to rain, lightning, darkness, time, or any other circumstances. The umpire's calls are final. There should be no questioning an umpire on a judgment call. Questions about rules shall occur with the umpire and both managers present. All issues on the field must be resolved and will be considered final for purposes of that game. Any rule clarification required should be requested through an incident report. No games can be played under protest to the town or league commissioners. In the case of rain stopping the game, it is recommended that a rain delay of 20 minutes be used before the game is officially ended. In the case of lightning stopping a game, resumption of play cannot begin unless 20 minutes has elapsed from the last lightning or all clear from a lightning detection system.
- 16) If the game is called for any reason after the start of the game before 4 full innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead) then the game must be made up from the beginning. If the game is called at the end of a complete inning after 4 full innings (3 ½ if the home team is ahead) then the game is considered complete even if it is a tie. If the game is called in the visiting half of the inning or during the home half of the inning and the home team is losing then the score will revert back to the last completed full inning and the game will be considered complete even if it is a tie.
- 17) Only rain outs and games called by the umpire (before 4 full innings are completed) will be rescheduled. Rescheduling games due to lack of players or coaches is not allowed. Everything should be done to complete games on their scheduled date including using substitutes.

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- 18) Tie game rule. If weather and game time limit rules permit, a complete game which ends in a tie shall go to international tie breaker rules. The last player out shall start the inning on second. Each batter starts with a 1-1 count. 3 outs played as normal (2017 updated).
- 19) No alcohol or tobacco products shall be used by players, coaches, managers, fans or parents during any games or practices on the field, bench, stands or the surrounding area.
- 20) Abusive or foul language and / or conduct will be grounds for removal from the field for players, manager, coaches and/or fans.
- 21) Managers are responsible for keeping players, coaches, fans and parents under control. Managers cannot play in games. Managers must notify the other managers if they will be out of town and provide assistant manager numbers in the case rain notification is needed.
- 22) Scorekeepers from both teams must be identified and must consult with each other to verify the score often during the game.
- 23) Scores must be reported to the league commissioner by the winning manager within 24 hours after the scheduled start of the game.
- 24) Potential Ejections - Umpires are to give a warning to the offending person (s) for potential ejection. If the situation does not improve then the umpire can eject the offending person(s) from the field. If the person leaves quietly then there will be a 1 game suspension for that person from attending the next scheduled game. If the person leaves by making a scene then there will be a 3 game suspension for that person from attending the next 3 games. If the person charges the umpire or threatens the umpire then the person will be suspended for the rest of the season. If the person does not leave the field when requested then the umpire can call a forfeit against the offending team. The umpire will notify the league commissioner of all ejections immediately after the game. The town and league commissioners will interview some people from the game to determine the suspension period.
- 25) Managers cannot (by joint agreement) change any rule before the game. They can clarify and agree to any rule that has been causing confusion or handled inconsistently by umpires, managers or coaches.

Game Playing Rules

- 1) Steel spikes are not permitted - at practices or at games.
- 2) Managers need to share the batting order with opposing teams, and must provide a copy of their lineup should an opposing team request it due to an in-game concern.
- 3) All players warming up a pitcher must wear a catcher's mask
- 4) All offensive players must wear a batting helmet which includes a face mask while batting or running the bases (2017 updated).
- 5) All infield players, pitcher included, must wear a fielder's mask (2017 updated).
- 6) Base coaches under 18 yrs old need to wear a batting helmet while on the field (2017 updated).

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7) Contact / Sliding / Defensive Interference

- a) Contact/Sliding/Defensive Interference are inherently "judgment" calls by the umpire so the only discussion with the umpire is rules interpretation.
- b) When the defensive player has the ball, it is the responsibility of the runner to avoid contact that affects safety. Specifically, if the runner does not slide, they need to not run into the defensive player. The runners are strongly suggested to slide. In the event contact is made during the act of sliding, the umpire is requested to be more lenient in their interpretation of this rule. If contact is made without a slide, the umpire should determine if it was incidental with an attempt to avoid contact or if the runner simply ran into the defensive player without an attempt at avoidance. The runner should be called out for contact made without any effort to avoid it.
- c) When the defensive player does not have the ball, they have an obligation to leave the baseline and access to the bases clear. In the event contact occurs and the defensive player does not have the ball, this is considered defensive interference and the runner should be considered safe at the base to which they are running. The catcher cannot impede the base runner attempting to score when she does not have the ball.
- d) The strictest interpretation of these rules should be on plays at the plate where the pitcher is covering a passed ball with a runner trying to steal from third base. The pitcher should be setting up for the catchers throw on the first base side of the plate to receive the throw. The runner should be sliding into home plate to ensure no dangerous collisions occur.

8) Stealing bases is permitted for all bases including home but only after the ball leaves the pitchers hand. The runner is called out if she leaves the base before the ball is pitched.

- a) Stealing shall not be permitted if one team is up by 10 or more runs.

9) Infield fly - An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not a line drive or an attempted bun) that an infielder (or outfielder playing in the infield) can catch with ordinary effort and the ball is hit before 2 are out and first and second base or first, second, and third are occupied. On larger dirt diamonds, the infield is defined as 22 feet beyond the bases.

10) Dropped Third Strike - If the third strike is not caught on the fly (before the ball touches the ground), the batter can try to advance to first base with one of these conditions: 1) no runner occupies first base at the time of the pitch with less than 2 outs or 2) there are 2 outs. Otherwise, the batter will be called out.

- a) For balls that are thrown to first from the first base side - the defensive player is to set up on the safety base. For balls on the third base side, the defensive player should set up on the white field base. First base side is imagining the first base line going back to the back stop as the point of separation.
- b) This rule is confusing for both the defensive player and the runner. In the event it does not happen the way it is supposed to be during the game - the coaches should stop the game for a moment, review the rule with the umpire and explain what is supposed to happen to their teams.
- c) With regard to collision in this situation, the runner should go to the base not occupied by the defender whether or not they are on the correct base. If this effort is made, the runner should not be called out for incidental contact.

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11) Run Limits (2017 new)

A team may only score four (4) runs per inning with the following exceptions:

- If the batting team is losing by more than four (4) runs they may score enough runs to tie the game.
- A team may score more than four (4) runs in an inning by playing to the completion of the play.

a) The exception of the "last inning" when unlimited runs are permitted.

12) If a courtesy runner is requested to the umpire then the player that made the last out will run. If that person is not available, then the person making the previous out will run.

13) The pitcher will be replaced if she hits 2 batters with a pitch during an inning. She will be replaced for the rest of the game if she hit's a third batter with a pitch during a later inning of the game.

14) Intentional walks are permitted by the pitcher or her manager advising the umpire that the batter will be walked. The batter should immediately take first base.

15) A 10 run mercy rule will be enforced at the end of any complete inning after 5 (after the half inning if the home team is ahead). If the home team gains a 10th run during the bottom of an inning after 5 complete innings then the game will be stopped this point. Upon implementation of the mercy rule, games can continue in practice mode without the umpire at the discretion of the managers.

16) Pitchers will be able to pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game. One pitch constitutes an inning for pitchers (not any other position). A pitcher may be taken out of a game and returned as long as the total number of innings pitched is less what is defined below. If it is not detected until sometime after the first pitch to a batter then the pitcher must be removed immediately from pitching and the playing field for that inning and substituted by someone in a defensive position on the field. The defensive team will play the field for that inning with 1 less position player. All pitches already pitched by the offending pitcher and resulting plays will count as valid pitches and valid plays.

17) Batters need to make an attempt to avoid being hit by a pitch (including rolling balls or balls which have already bounced off the ground). Bases awarded is up to the discretion of umpire.

18) Pitchers must start their motion with both feet on the pitching rubber. They can take one step forward in the process of delivering the pitch, no step back is permitted. Rocking or crouching is fine so long as the feet do not take a step. When the ball leaves her fingers, the pitcher must have 1 foot in contact with the pitching rubber or be in the process of dragging her back foot off the rubber. Releasing the ball without the back foot in contact with the rubber or the ground will be immediately called an illegal pitch or a dead ball. This is to eliminate leaping or crow hopping for the pitcher to gain an unfair advantage. The pitch will be considered a ball and any runners must return to their original base. A potential swing by the batter will not count. Since this is hard to determine by one umpire, it is up to the manger to instruct and monitor his/her pitchers in the proper method of pitching (2017 updated).

19) If a batter is injured during batting and cannot continue batting then the next batter will assume the existing count without an out being declared.

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20) In games where safety orange bases are used, the runner is instructed to run to the orange base other than what is defined in item 10 - Dropped Third Strike. Not using the orange base is considered "missing the base" on all plays not covered by item 10.

21) Jewelry

- a) No jewelry can be worn. Non-metallic bracelets do not constitute jewelry for purposes of this rule.
- b) A non-decorative bobby pin (pictured below) does not constitute jewelry.



22) _____

23) Shirts/Jerseys should be tucked in

24) **Pitching Distance** - 40' from the back tip of the plate to the front edge of the pitching rubber.

25) **Base Distance** 60' apart

26) **Visits to Pitcher** The pitcher must be removed from pitching anytime she is visited for the second time from someone from the bench during an inning. An injury to the pitcher timeout and coach visit to the pitcher (approved by the umpire) would not count toward this total.

27) Any legal, 12" official softball bat can be used for games or practice. Legal bats must bear ASA 2004 or later certification. The bat must be for softball, not baseball. (2017 updated).

28) Pitchers are allowed to warm up with 5 pitches at the start of the inning. If a pitcher is substituted for during an inning, the new pitcher is allowed 5 warm up pitches before they begin pitching to a batter.

29) A fake bunt is an illegal act and results in an immediate out and a dead ball. If a player squares to bunt they can pull their bat back to try to take a ball or they can attempt to make contact by bunting the ball. Any attempt to chop or change the bunt to a swing is considered an illegal act for purposes of this rule.