



IFPAA League Rules (Slow Pitch – Ponytail 7-8) NOV 2010



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The goals of Ponytail Softball are to keep the players safe, develop their skills, and **have fun**. These rules are defined in the spirit of these goals. The players will learn sportsmanship by the examples set by the Managers and parents.

RULE I – PLAYERS

- A. A team shall consist of the full roster of players whose positions shall be designated as follows: pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, and the balance of the roster in the outfield. Players are not permitted to play the same position more than three innings per game. Players may not play more than three innings at first base, catcher, and pitcher combined. Each player is **required** to play the infield a minimum of 2 innings; 3 innings is a **suggested** minimum.
- B. Each player must bat in turn. Latecomers will be added to the end of the batting order. A girl who becomes injured or ill or who otherwise leaves during a game may be removed from the lineup with no penalty to her team. If that girl recovers or otherwise returns during the game, she shall return to the lineup in her former position. Opposing team is to be notified of latecomers, removals, and returns to the lineup.
- C. A team must be able to field at least seven Ponytail League players. Managers may by mutual agreement postpone a game (for reasons other than weather) no later than twenty-four hours before the scheduled start of the game.
- D. Qualified six year old T-Ball Softball League girls may be called up on a game by game basis under the following conditions:
1. A minimum of six Ponytail League girls are also playing.
 2. The opposing managers and league commissioners agree that the T-Ball Softball League girl's skills are such that her safety will not be jeopardized.
 3. The player is selected from a list of capable and willing players provided by the T-Ball Softball League Commissioner.
 4. The Ponytail League game does not conflict with a T-Ball Softball League game that the call-up may be playing otherwise.
 5. No more than two T-Ball Softball league girls may play on the same team during one game.
 6. If a team calls up a T-Ball Softball League girl, she must play in accordance with Rules I-A & B, above.



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RULE II – PLAYING FIELD

- A. The distance between bases is fifty five (55) feet. All bases must be anchored.
- B. A pitching line will be marked thirty (35) feet from the point of home plate. The adult pitcher may adjust this distance as seen fit for the ability of the batter, but the Ponytail pitcher may stand no closer than pitching line.
- C. Hash marks will be placed halfway between all bases except for home to first.
- D. A line will be marked ten (10) feet behind the bases to define the line for the outfielders to start play as indicated in Rule VIIC below.
- E. Base lines will be marked between each base. Base lines run from the tip of home along the back of first and third, and from the back of first to second, and second to third.

RULE III – GAME LENGTH

- A. A regular game is five innings unless shortened because of time, darkness, or weather.
- B. An inning is over when three outs are recorded, or the batting team scores six runs.
- C. At the first appearance of lightning, the game will be stopped. Players must move a safe distance from the playing field, preferably into a vehicle or building. The game may continue if no lightning is sighted for ten minutes.
- D. The time limit for the games is two hours whenever another game is scheduled at the same field following the current game. Make every effort to complete all five innings.

RULE IV – PITCHING

- A. Managers or coaches pitch to their own team. No pitching arc is required, but pitchers must pitch the ball in a correct slow pitch manner. Pitchers may adjust distance and pitch to the ability of the batter.
- B. The pitcher may deliver a maximum of seven (7) pitches to each batter, unless the batter fouls the 7th pitch.



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RULE V – BATTING

- A. The batter must wear a helmet whenever the batter is swinging a bat. This includes warming up.
- B. Only the batter on deck is permitted to swing a bat to warm up, and the batter on deck may do so only in the warm-up cage.
- C. The scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the batting order correct, the on-deck batter in the warm-up cage, and the safety of the warm-up cage.
- D. The batter is out on five strikes for all games prior to Memorial Day. After Memorial Day, the batter is out on three strikes. Strikes are swinging only; no called strikes.
- E. The batter is allowed seven (7) pitches to put the ball in play unless the batter strikes out. The batter is out after the 7th pitch, unless the 7th pitch is fouled. If the 7th pitch is fouled, the batter will receive additional pitches until the batter either puts the ball in play, strikes out, or takes a pitch.
- F. The batter is out if a foul ball is caught outside the batter's cage, or the foul ball is over the batter's head. All other fouls are considered foul tips. The batter is out if the catcher catches a foul tip on either the last strike, or last pitch (7th or more).
- G. A batter may not hit a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. The ball will be called dead, the batter is out, and the baserunners may not advance.
- H. The first time a batter throws a bat, she is warned. On subsequent thrown bats by the same batter, she is called out.

RULE VI – BASERUNNING

- A. A baserunner is entitled to continue to advance on a batted ball until the ball becomes dead. The ball is dead when:
 - 1. A thrown ball crosses a foul line. The baserunner advances only to the base to which she was heading (at risk of being put out) if the baserunner has crossed the hash mark prior to the ball crossing the foul line. If the baserunner has not crossed the hash mark, the runner must return to the previous base unless the runner is forced by the batter to second base.
 - 2. A ball thrown from the outfield breaks the plane of the infield. The plane of the infield is defined by the line of the bases.



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- a). If a baserunner has crossed the hash mark, the runner may proceed to the next base at risk of being put out.
 - b). If the baserunner has not crossed the hash mark when the ball becomes dead, the runner must return to the previous base. Should that baserunner attempt to advance to the next base, the runner is at risk of being put out. If that baserunner safely reaches the next base, the baserunner must return to the previous base.
3. A throw is made to a base where an out can be recorded. Runners may advance only if past the hash mark. (e.g. a throw is made to second base to attempt a put out on a baserunner advancing from first to second. That throw is not caught. The baserunner may not advance to third, and all other baserunners may advance only if past the hash mark).
4. Once an infielder has control of the ball and holds the ball, play must stop, and runners can advance only if they have passed the hash mark. Should that infielder make a throw, rule 3. above applies.
- B. The baserunner is out if the baserunner leaves the base path. A fielder may not block the basepath or otherwise obstruct the runner.
- C. A baserunner may 'tag-up' and advance to the next base after a catch has been made for a putout in the outfield. The baserunner must contact the base after the catch has been made prior to advancing. The baserunner must reach the hash mark prior to the ball breaking the plane of the infield in accordance with rule VI.A.2.b). above in order to advance. This encourages the outfielder to throw the ball quickly to the infield.
- D. If a baserunner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the baserunner will be given a warning, but will not be called out.
- E. Base stealing is not permitted.
- F. Sliding is permitted only in a feet-first manner.
- G. A baserunner is out if her manager, coach, or teammates touch her while the ball is alive.

RULE VII – FIELDING

- A. The fielding team should be encouraged to throw the ball to the proper base, and proper coverage of bases should be emphasized. The rules on running are intended to encourage proper infield play, and not penalize fielders for attempting to make the proper play.



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- B. An out is recorded if a fielder catches a batted ball in the air, catches a throw at a base before a forced base runner reaches the base, tags a runner that is not on a base, or as otherwise indicated in these rules.
- C. The outfielders must be situated in fair territory at least ten feet beyond the normal base lines. Outfielders cannot make a putout by tagging a base or a runner. The intention of this rule is to encourage proper coverage of bases, and to teach the outfielders to throw the ball to an infielder. (An outfielder may assist a putout by throwing the ball to an infielder.)
- D. The infielders should be situated in the designated positions, and must avoid lining up in the direct baseline between the bases.
- E. The pitcher must throw a ball which she has fielded to a teammate in order to record an out. The pitcher may not tag a runner to record an out, nor beat the runner to a base with a fielded ball to record an out. The pitcher may record an out at a base, or tag a runner out if the pitcher has received a throw while covering a base.
- F. The infield fly rule is not in effect.

RULE VII – EQUIPMENT

- A. Players must wear the shirt issued by IFPAA.
- B. Players must wear black uniform pants. Shorts are permitted, but must be black athletic shorts.
- C. Players may wear shoes with rubber spikes. Metal spikes of any type are not permitted.
- D. Catchers are required to wear a mask, chest protector, and shin guards.
- E. Batters, base runners, and batters on deck are required to wear helmets at all times.
- F. Players may not wear jewelry. Earrings that cannot be taken out (i.e., newly-pierced ears) must be covered with a bandage or tape.

RULE IX – MANAGERS

- A. The manager is responsible for team conduct during the time his/her team is at field site. The team manager will carry on any communications with the umpire.



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- B. The home team manager must provide one new game ball for each game. Only balls issued by IFPAA are permitted.
- C. The home team manager is responsible for distributing the helmets, bats, and catcher's equipment. The home team manager is responsible for returning the equipment to the proper boxes after the game. **This equipment will be placed in its own box; this equipment shall never be placed in the box with the field supplies (bases, field white, field dry).**
- D. Both the home and away team managers are responsible for preparing the field. This includes setting and lining the bases, dragging the infield, remove standing water (never remove standing water from the infield by sweeping it into the outfield), treat damp areas (spread field dry, allow it to work, and rake it in), and repair holes. Do not remove standing water from the infield by sweeping it into the outfield. **Field equipment shall be kept in a separate box from the helmets and catcher's equipment.**
- E. The home team manager provides the home plate umpire. The home plate umpire is responsible for safe/out calls at first, third, and home. The home plate umpire is responsible to stop play and control the advancement of runners in accordance with Rule VI.
- F. The away team manager provides the field umpire. The field umpire is responsible for safe/out calls at second base, putouts on fly balls, and assisting the home plate umpire in determining positions of runners for advancement in accordance with Rule VI.
- G. Umpires must be at least sixteen (16) years old, and understand the rules of the game. There will be no arguments with the umpire. If there is a question on interpretation of the rules, both managers will refer to the rules, discuss the issue, and settle the issue amicably.
- H. The home team will occupy the bench on the first base side of the field. The away team will occupy the bench on the third base side of the field.
- I. The home team may use the infield from 15 minutes prior to the game until game time. The away team may use the infield prior to the home team. The managers are responsible for starting the games on time.
- J. Each manager will provide a scorekeeper to record runs and outs, maintain the proper batting order, and have players ready to bat when their turn comes up.
- K. It is the home team manager's responsibility to contact the away manager to cancel game due to weather. The home team manager should visit the field to determine if the field is in playable condition, and may confer, if necessary, with the visiting manager to make a mutual decision. The home manager must contact the commissioner to reschedule a canceled game, and coordinate the rescheduled date and time with the away manager.



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