

Tri-County Official Playing Rules

Recreational Girls Fastpitch Softball

Spring Season 2026

10u Age Division

Participating Leagues:

Miss Charlotte

Miss Desoto

Miss Englewood

Miss North Port

Miss Punta Gorda

Miss Venice

Attention All Coaches:

If you have any issues involving the conduct and/or actions of any manager, coach, team mom/dad, and/or representative of a team, regardless of "home city", at any time during the season, please contact your board and voice your concerns immediately. Do not wait several days or weeks to address the situation. Issues can be best handled at the time of the occurrence rather than waiting.

Thank You,

The Tri-County League Presidents

Per county laws no tobacco, e-cigarettes, or alcohol products are permitted on the fields, dugouts or in the stands.

The Tri-County girl's recreational girl's fastpitch softball games will be played under **USSSA** rules with the following exceptions: If there is no local rule, **USSSA rules will prevail.**

1. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- a. All players must wear uniforms as provided by their league. This may include jerseys, pants or shorts, and socks. Pants or shorts must be the same color as those mandated by their league. Hats or visors are optional. **The use of metal cleats is prohibited (10U & 12U).** Players not in proper uniform will be removed from the game.
- b. Metal cleats are optional in 14/16U (Mid-season & All-Stars are unacceptable)
- c. Players are to only use Certificated and Stamped Fastpitch Bats
- d. All batting helmets must be properly fitting, include a full guard and have a chin strap are optional.
- e. Pitchers are not permitted to wear sleeves that are the same color as the ball on their pitching arm. Facemasks are mandatory for all infielders.
- f. Jewelry can be worn with the intent that no jewelry obstruct or cause a safety hazard of snagging or catching on equipment, uniforms or other players. No bracelets, no hoop earrings (studs only), and necklaces need to be tucked into jerseys. If necessary, band aids or appropriate covering can be used to cover earrings.
- g. An 11-inch softball shall be used for 10U.

2. INNINGS, TIME AND RUN LIMITATIONS

- a. Forfeit time is 10 minutes after scheduled start time without advanced communication from the traveling team.
- b. A game will begin and be played with 8 players with no penalty. Pick up players count toward the minimum number of players. A game may begin with 7 players with the 8th batting position being vacant. An out will be recorded for the missing player. Once a sub arrives, they are to be placed in the 8th batting position and there is no longer an out recorded for the position..
- c. All players' names and numbers must be listed on their team's official lineup submitted prior to the start of the game, in order to be eligible to enter the game once it is in progress. Players not present at the start of the game should be listed as substitutes on the lineup sheet. Late players shall be added at the bottom of the

batting order and may enter the game when their position in the batting order comes up or when then their team enters the field defensively.

- d. The "Progressive" 5 run rule will be in effect every inning on a batted ball. This means if the 5th runner is on the base and the girl up to bat hits the ball in fair territory that runner can continue to run until that ball makes it in front of her and the girl in front of her has possession of the ball at that time no more runs will be able to score.
- e. Coaches will be warned if they are intentionally "loading" the bases prohibiting the natural progression of the game. A 2nd warning will warrant a game suspension.
- f. If there are two outs and the pitcher or catcher is on base she can be traded out with the last batter to be called out so that she has time to prepare for their defensive play.
- g. Game duration will be limited to 1 hours, 20 minutes. No new inning will start after 2 hours.
- h. If the game is tied at the end of regulation play, the international tie breaker will be in effect for 1 inning. The inning shall begin with the last batter of the previous inning to complete an at-bat, assuming the base running position at 2nd base with no outs.
- i. No new inning may begin past the 2-hour game mark, during regular season games.
- j. Games are official after 4 complete innings of play or time expires, unless the 10 run mercy rule is in effect.
- k. The 10-Run Mercy Rule is **MANDATORY. No exceptions!** If one team is ahead by 10 runs after 5 innings of play or the home team is ahead by 12 runs after 4 ½ innings of play, the team with the 10 run lead will be declared the winner. **(15/12/10 after 3/4/5)**

3. PITCHING RULES

- a. Any player on the team's roster is eligible to pitch
- b. Pitchers will pitch from the 35ft feet mark in 10U with both feet starting on the "pitchers' plate"
- c. Pitchers will be granted 5 warm-up pitches at the start of the game, and 3 warm-up pitches between innings. Relief pitchers will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches upon entering the game, and 3 thereafter. Any additional warm-up pitches may be called

balls at the umpire's discretion. Coaches may warm-up pitches between innings while the catcher is getting gear on, and are considered as part of the allotted warm-up pitches.

- d. Starting pitchers may return to the pitcher's position one (1) time during a game. Relief pitchers **may not** return to the pitcher's position during the game.
- e. Illegal pitches can be called in the 10U divisions.
- f. Pitching violations will result in the following:
 - 10U/12U – 1st and 2nd offense receives a warning, 3rd offense the batter is awarded a ball.
 - 14/16U – 1st offense receives a warning, 2nd offense the batter is awarded a ball.
- g. Coaches may call 3 timeouts per pitcher per game. The 4th time out will result in the pitcher being replaced. Time outs shall not exceed 60 seconds in length.

h. USSSA PITCHING RULE CHANGE 2020

PLEASE REFER TO USSSA RULES FOR THE AMENDED PITCHING RULE

A PITCHER MAY EITHER HAVE BOTH FEET IN CONTACT WITH THE PLATE WHEN THEY BRING THEIR HANDS TOGETHER OR THE PIVOT FOOT ONLY IN CONTACT WITH THE PLATE AND MAY STEP BACK OR START WITH THE NON PIVOT FOOT BACK AS LONG AS THEY REMAIN WITHIN THE 24"

4. SCOREBOOK VERIFICATION:

- a. A "team" scorebook must be available for review, by the opposing manager if so requested. It must include all games for the current week.
- b. At the end of the game, opposing managers, coaches or team mom/dad must sign each other's scorebook to verify the official number of outs pitched by every player that pitched during the game.

5. BATTING RULES AND BASERUNNING:

- a. All teams must bat their entire roster.
- b. Batting out of order will result in an out, unless caused by injury/illness.

- c. If a player is injured during an at-bat and awarded first base by the umpire, she may request a "courtesy runner". The last batter out will assume her base running position on first.
- d. If a player misses an at-bat due to injury or illness, then she shall be considered to have left the game and may not re-enter the game further. **This will not be counted as out for the at-bat.**
- e. The on-deck batter will be allowed and must stand in the on-deck area behind the batter.
- f. Stealing is permitted, only after the ball has been released from the pitcher's hand. Leaving a base early will result in an out as declared by the umpire.
- g. Drop 3rd Strike rule is in effect. If on strike 3 a catcher drops the ball, the batter may advance to 1st base if the base is not occupied with less than two outs. If there is two outs, the batter may advance to 1st base on a drop 3rd strike regardless of position of runners or the number of runners on base.
- h. A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate, by stepping out of the batter's box, by making any other movement which hinders action at home or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away. In the case where there is a runner stealing from 3rd base to home the batter must vacate the batter's box so that the batter does not interfere with the catcher's ability to make a play on the runner and/or make contact with the runner as they are entering home plate. If a batter moves in a way that interferes with the catcher's ability to make a play on a runner the batter is out.
- i. If there is a play being made at HOME, and the runner does not attempt to slide, the runner is automatically out.

6. DEFENSIVE PLAYER RULES:

- a. All players in the lineup submitted prior to the game must play in the field a minimum of two (2) defensive innings or six (6) defensive outs, unless the game is ended by the 10 run mercy rule.
- b. 10U and can field 10 defensive players (OPTIONAL).
- c. Outfielders must begin each defensive play in the grass behind the baselines.
- d. There will be an infield fly rule in effect: Per the umpire's discretion and applied when there are fewer than two outs and there is a forced play. The ball must be in fair territory and reasonably playable by fielders.

7. PICKUP PLAYERS:

A team may use a pick-up player if they cannot field a team. The definition of fielding a team is having 9 players. Pick-up players count toward a team's minimum requirement of 7 players to begin a game.

- a. A team may pick-up a maximum of 2 players per game.
- b. Managers must indicate all pick-up players on the official lineup, and notify the umpire and opposing team at the plate meeting.
- c. Pick-up players must wear their own team's uniform.
- d. Pick-up players must play on a team in the same league as the team borrowing them.
- e. Pick-up players may be borrowed from a lower age division, but will be expected to comply with all age division rules in which they are playing.
- f. Pick-up players must play in an outfield position for the duration of the game and bat in the last position in the batting order.
- g. Pick-up players are committed for the full game.
- h. If a regular team player arrives after the official game has started they may enter the game as long as the total number of players does not exceed 9 players including already identified pick-up players.
- i. If an additional regular team player is added, they will be added to the bottom of the official lineup at that time.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP:

The following will be enforced at the umpire's discretion:

- a.** Taunting of the opposing pitcher.
- b.** No negative cheers directed at the opposing team. Cheers of a positive nature, at a reasonable level are acceptable.
- c.** Profane, negative, excessive, loud or argumentative comments are not acceptable.
- d.** Failure to shake hands at the end of a game or arguing with the umpire(s) is not acceptable and may result in a penalty. Penalty to be determined by the offending party's league president.

9. CANCELLATION OF GAMES:

Games may be called due to inclement weather and/or unplayable field conditions. The following will be followed.

- a.** The DOD will call any game(s) due to inclement weather and/or unplayable field conditions at least one hour before game time when possible.
- b.** The DOD must contact the umpires and the president or designated contact person (scheduler) of the league whose team(s) is involved in the scheduled games.
- c.** The DOD makes the final determination if play shall occur prior to game(s) starting.
- d.** If the DOD did not call the game ahead of time, the umpire will make the final determination if play shall begin and/or continue. The umpire shall control the field from that point on.

10. UMPIRES / DOD

An "umpire" or DOD will be provided by the "home" team to ensure that the rules of play are being followed.

- a. An umpire / DOD controls the field from the moment official game play begins.
- b. The umpire must conduct a pre-game plate meeting asking each team if
 - Teams are legally and properly equipped
 - Receiving batting orders from both teams
 - Announcing special group rules when applicable
 - Starting the official game clock
- c. The DOD will ensure mound distances and field lining is accurate to the appropriate age group prior to start of game. If, in the case a team notices that the mound is not at the correct distance, the inning must be finished prior to the repositioning of mound meaning that both teams have to pitch from the initial mound distance. No mounds can be moved mid-inning.
- d. The umpire / DOD shall stand in the infield for the duration of the game.
- e. All new umpires must attend the Tri-County conducted umpire training prior to the season start to be eligible to umpire end of season (EOS) tournaments.
- f. All leagues will receive a copy of the sign in sheet from umpire training for their official records.
- g. All leagues must submit their EOS tournament brackets with the umpire's name prior to tournament start to ensure only approved umpires are used.
- h. Umpires / DOD who are also parents and/or board members may only umpire under these conditions:
 - They DO NOT umpire / DOD a game in which their own child is playing

11. COACHES AND MANAGERS

- a. Only team players, managers, coaches, team mom/dad and official scorekeepers are allowed in the dugout.
- b. There **MUST** be an adult female either on the field or in the dugout at all times.

- c. Managers or coaches ejected from a regular season game will automatically be suspended for their team's next game.
- d. Any manager or coach ejected from an EOS tournament game will automatically be suspended for the remainder of the tournament.

12. DRAFTS

- a. Drafts **SHALL** be conducted every season for all organizations that have more than one team at a particular age group (ie: having two 12U teams must participate in a draft in order to make all teams in an age group **equally competitive**). The idea of Recreational Softball is to be a place for young girls to learn the game and fundamental skills of softball while having fun and falling in love with the sport in order to progress while also being competitively fair.
- b. There will be a maximum of FOUR players allowed to be kept from previous season. Players that are related to Coaches or Assistant Coaches count towards these FOUR players. For example, if a Coach has ONE daughter in which is a player and Assistant Coach has TWO daughters in which are both players, they can in turn pick up ONE player from their team from the previous season totaling at FOUR players. Additionally, if one of the three daughters plays a skilled position (ie; pitcher or catcher), their picks from the previous season cannot be the same additional skilled position player (if a daughter is a pitcher, the very next pick cannot be a pitcher).
- c. New teams at a particular age group will always have the first pick while also having continuous and simultaneous picks until they have the equal FOUR players as the returning team from the same age group. They will in turn have the FIRST "draft pick" amongst the remaining players to be selected. This team will also not pick more than one skilled position player simultaneously (ie; picking two pitchers and one catcher as their first three picks). The idea is to have the teams be equally competitive and not STACKED with skilled position players and/or travel ball players.
- d. Travel ball players will be identified prior to draft and will be equally distributed on teams to make teams equally competitive as possible.
- e. After the FOUR return players have been selected the draft will be initiated by the new team having the first pick. If there are more than one teams from the previous season, the team with the lower record from the previous season will have the first pick. The picks will continue until all players participating in the draft have been

picked. In the case that there are players not present at the draft, they will be picked as well at the tail end of the draft. This will prevent Coaches from intentionally telling players to not show up and picking them based on their knowledge of the player's skill level.

- f. All players that are not in attendance for evaluations will be placed into a blind draw. After all players in attendance have been drafted, coaches will blindly draw players not in attendance.

13. END OF SEASON (EOS) TOURNAMENT RULES:

- a. End of season (EOS) tournament seeding will be based on the win/loss average and allowed runs of the season.
- b. In all tournament games, teams with the higher seed will be considered the home team.
- c. There will be **NO** pickups during (EOS)
- d. Tournament play will be single elimination.
- e. All games with the exception of the championship game will be 1 hour, 20 minutes. There will be no time limit in the championship game, but there will be a maximum of five (5) innings played or a maximum of 2hrs. No new inning will start after the 2hr mark and the game will go to a Texas tie-breaker.
- f. The 15-run mercy rule will remain in effect for the duration of the EOS tournament.
- g. To be eligible for postseason play which includes the Tri-County EOS tournament and Miss Florida All-Stars, players must play in at least 51% of all regular season games played by their own team.
- h. Any requests for exceptions to the 51% rule due to extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed and decided by the Tri-County league presidents.
- i. Once the EOS tournament schedule is published, games will not be rescheduled, unless for weather. Any requests or exceptions due to extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed and decided by the Tri-County league presidents.
- j. In the event a team is not able to play and/or does not show up to play in the scheduled championship game the next team in line will be given an opportunity to play.

14. PROTESTS:

- a. Protests will not be allowed or considered if they are based solely upon the decision involving judgment on the part of the umpire / DOD.
- b. Valid protests will be considered concerning matters of the following types:
 - Failure of an umpire / DOD to apply the correct rule to a given situation
 - Failure of an umpires / DOD interpretation of a given rule
 - Failure to impose the correct penalty for given violation
- c. **Notification of intent to protest items identified in section 13 PART B must be given before the next pitch or it WILL NOT BE HEARD.**
- d. The umpire and scorekeepers will record the conditions and circumstances at the time of the protest.
- e. The protesting manager **MUST** present \$50.00 cash to the DOD at the time of protest notification. **PROTESTS WITHOUT PAYMENT WILL NOT BE HEARD.**
- f. The protesting manager will submit a formal written email protest to their league president within 24 hours. The written protest must be in standard rulebook form and include:
 - Date, time and place of the game in protest.
 - The names of all umpires, and scorekeepers present
 - The rule and section on which the protest is based.
 - All facts involving the protest.
- g. A protest committee shall deliberate and rule on all properly filed protests. This committee shall meet within 48 hours after the protest has been filed. All inter-league protests shall be decided by a protest committee of equal representation of the leagues involved, consisting of at least two (2) board members from each league and the umpire on duty during the game.
- h. When a protest involves a misinterpretation of a rule, the game will be replayed from the point of the incorrect, with the decision corrected.
- i. If the protest is found valid, the game stands as played.
- j. If a protest is turned down the \$50.00 will go to the league that wins the protest. If the protest is upheld, the money will be refunded. This must occur within one week of the protest committee's decision.

k. **Exceptions** - The following items may be protested upon being made aware:

- **Misrepresentation of pitcher's eligibility when verified prior to the game.**
- **Age eligibility of players in a particular age division.**

l. The protesting manager must follow **SECTION 13 PART F** to have their protest heard.

m. In the event of pitcher eligibility, the protest committee will review the score books from all games that occurred in that week to determine eligibility.

n. In the event of age eligibility, the player in question's birth certificate must be presented within 24 hours of the protest by the league president.

NO request by any team to view birth certificates will be upheld prior to, during or after game play. Eligibility of players must be determined per the official protest rules.

OFFICIAL