

2026
JEFFERSON COUNTY
CO-ED



SOFTBALL LEAGUE
RULE BOOK

revised 4/28/26

Games are seven innings, when possible, but after five innings any game is considered complete. The 5:45pm game must begin **PROMPTLY** so the 7:15pm game can start on time. Late-game teams have priority at 7:15. If after 7:05, the 5:45 game teams should **NOT** start a new inning.

1. **Use of alcohol is prohibited during any game, at any field!** If this rule is violated, **the entire team will be suspended from the league.** Smoking is not allowed in the dugout, or on the field. Please smoke elsewhere and dispose of waste properly.
2. Batting orders must alternate between player-designated categories (even if a player must bat twice in an inning). Coaches will work with players to place them in the category, in which they identify with, for lineup purposes. Every player on the roster who is present must be included in the batting order and must bat., (even if someone must bat twice in an inning.) **Each batter will start with 1 ball and 1 strike.**
3. **Each 10-member** team must have 3 individuals whom identify as female and 3 individuals whom identify as male in the infield positions. The outfield positions must be comprised of 2 individuals whom identify as female and 2 whom identify as male. For nonbinary players, the coach will work to place that player in the line-up/field where they feel comfortable. **All line-ups must be shared, reviewed and agreed upon by coaches of both teams before play begins. Once agreed upon, line-ups are set for the entirety of the game.** Each player should be allowed to make their own throw/catch according to position. (Example: one player should not always take the catch away from another player, regardless of inexperience).
4. If a team has to forfeit a game, as long as both coaches agree, a game can be played for fun.
5. All players and teams will use/hit a 12-inch ball. **Home team must provide these balls. The use of any type of ball other than a restricted flight ball is not permitted.** The balls can be either leather or synthetic.
6. We use an **ASA and/or USSSA** certified “Softball Bat” Please refrain from using any other type of bat.
7. This is an adult softball league. You must be at least 18 years of age.
8. Players may play for one or more teams but they must designate a primary team and play all games for the primary team. (*Players must play “up” in divisions, not down.*) Players may not change their primary team without League approval. Players may play for other leagues. Teams are allowed to add players to their roster during the season without League approval.
9. To be eligible for tournament play, “new” players have to play a minimum of 15 innings.
10. **All players must sign a County Rec Registration Liability Waiver prior to participation in practice or game play. A team that plays with a non-registered participant will forfeit.**
11. No team may score more than 10 runs in an inning, with the exception of the 7th inning.
12. All eligible players are to be listed on the lineup at game time. If a player is not at the game when it begins, they must be put at the very end of the batting order upon arrival.
13. **Team must forfeit if they have 8 or less players. Can play with 9, but must play one short in the outfield.**

14. We will use a STRIKE MAT: Pitchers must have one foot on the pitcher's mound, 50 feet from home plate, when delivering the pitch. If the pitched ball hits any part of the *strike mat* it is considered a strike, and the catcher is responsible for calling out – “STRIKE!” If the ball **doesn't** hit the strike mat, it is not a strike, it is a ball and the catcher must also call out – “BALL!” Each pitched ball must have an arc of 6-12 feet, pitches that are too high or too low are considered an illegal pitch “BALL”. The 1st and 3rd base coaches will call a “BALL”. **Each batter will start with 1 ball and 1 strike against them. *IF you make a play (swing the back) on an illegal pitch, the ball IS LIVE, and will be called accordingly.**

15. **A BATTER after their 2nd strike can hit 2 foul balls, on the 3rd they are OUT – Each batter will start with 1 ball and 1 strike against them.**

16. A BATTER WALKS after 4 balls. If a batter is *intentionally* walked than they may take two bases.

17. Games may be canceled due to rain: Go to www.countyrec.com or call Rec 360.385.2221 Cell 360.531.2333 for the latest in rain out information.

18. **NO METAL CLEATS.**

19. No bunting.

20. No leading off the base, or stealing. The runner's foot must stay in contact with the base until the ball reaches the strike/zone (in the air).

21. It is the runner's responsibility to get out of the way of active play. *Once you know you're out, or in a situation where you may get hit, give up the play and take the out.

TAGGED OUTS are those where, after a ball has been batted and base runners are advancing, the ball can be controlled by a defensive player and used to “tag” a runner out before they make it to a base. **FORCED OUTS** are those where after a ball has been batted and runners are advancing, if there is a runner on a base after you – you are forced to run. A defensive player controlling the ball can touch the base you are advancing to and you would be automatically out. (Ex: A runner on first and a batter, or bases loaded.) (Ex: If there is a batter, and a runner on 2nd only, the runner on 2nd is not “forced” to run, therefore must be tagged out if they advance.) new rule 6/3/2021- **HOME PLATE- *THE CATCHER MAY NOT OBSTRUCT HOME PLATE – Meaning they cannot stand on the plate or in the runner's path without the ball (even if they are in the act of receiving a throw).** To avoid contact/injury at home plate, the runner can run towards the strike-mat. If it's a close call, first/third base coaches will make the call, if they didn't see the play, runner safe. *In tournament, if there is contact with the catcher, player is out and can be ejected if the umpire sees fit.*

22. **BASE RUNNING:** The base runner **MUST** avoid the fielder attempting to make a play on the ball. If the base runner is obviously out before they reach the base, they must not interfere with the play. If, for instance, a possible double play is interrupted by a base runner that is already considered out, both players will be called out.

23. A **BASE RUNNER** who charges into a fielder/catcher attempting to force a collision that jars the ball loose is **OUT**, and **EJECTED** from the game. **(Slide, don't charge!)**

24. **PINCH RUNNERS** are only allowed for players slowed by injury or special condition. After batting, the batter must make it safely to 1st base. Pinch runner must be the teammate, who was last out.

25. **Infield Fly Rule:** The infield is generally considered to be the field's dirt portion. When a fly ball is hit in that area the batter is automatically out with runners on 1st, and 2nd, or with bases loaded, all with less than 2 outs. This rule aims to prevent the defense from intentionally dropping easy pop-ups in an attempt to turn double or triple-plays.

26. An **OVERTHROW** occurs when a ball is thrown **OUT OF PLAY**, not simply when a ball is dropped and rolls a few feet away from a 1st or 3rd baseman.

27. **FOUL BALLS** cannot be caught for outs once they cross the **OUT OF PLAY** line. **Memorial and HJ Carroll fields all have different OUT OF PLAY zones.**

28. **HOW MANY BASES DO YOU GET ON AN OVERTHROW?** When a defender makes an overthrow **OUT OF PLAY**, the base runners get the base they are running toward, plus another base. **HOWEVER**, the call is made from the *point the defender threw the ball*, not when the baseman missed the throw. An overthrow affects **ALL** base runners active at the time. For example, if a base runner is approaching 2nd base when the ball is thrown, and the ball goes **OUT OF PLAY**, the runner is awarded 1st and 2nd bases. If the runner has reached 1st base, the overthrow would award 2nd and 3rd bases. ****When the ball is "not caught" has nothing to do in deciding how many bases are awarded – it is when the ball is THROWN.****

29. If a baseman **DROPS** the ball but it does **NOT** go **OUT OF PLAY**, a runner can still attempt to advance. But there are no "free" bases and the runner can be thrown (by tag or force out) out if the defender recovers in time.

30. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 complete innings, the mercy rule is in effect. If a team is leading by 10 or more runs after 5 complete innings, the mercy rule is in effect. ***HOWEVER**, In the **CHAMPIONSHIP GAME**, there is no mercy rule. The team down by 10 or more runs, after 5 complete innings, may choose to forfeit but a forfeit will not be applied automatically.

FIELDS

REMEMBER to Patrol your bench areas for litter and cigarette butts! If you want the infield to be in the best possible condition, bring your own rake!

HJ CARROLL: An **OUT OF PLAY** zone is the edge of bank in 1st base / right field line and straight line extended from backstop-fence down 3rd base/ left field line. If a ball is hit or rolls into the drainage swale in right field or center it is a **NO PLAY-HOME RUN**.

MEMORIAL FIELD: An **OUT OF PLAY** zone is chalked to protect the “dugout benches”. Otherwise, the **BASE OF THE HILL** on the 3rd baseline, and “light post” extended, after passing dug out, on the 1st base line is considered **OUT OF PLAY**. A ball overthrown to 1st base remains **IN PLAY** until it reaches the light post extended, dead-ball out of play. **BALL considered IN PLAY:** Ball hit off grandstand façade, off fence, off light poles, or rolls or bounces into the shed is in play.

NO PLAY – GROUND RULE DOUBLE: Ball is hit into or bounces into out of play area between storage shed and fence, will be a double. If ball is hit in the air and hits the storage shed this will also be a double. If a ball is hit into the left field, in fair play, and hits the bank or fence, or rolls into the cones or soccer goals, this will be a double. **NO PLAY – GROUND RULE DOUBLE:** Ball hits on field and bounces into bleachers. **HOME RUN IS GIVEN:** When ball is hit, rolls, or bounces into grandstands' concrete corridor; when ball is hit into the grandstand bleachers or over the grandstand roof. Ball (fair ball) hit over the left field fence.

IRONDALE: If a ball is hit or rolls into the playground area in right field or center it is a **NO PLAY-HOME RUN**. Straight line extended from backstop-fence down 3rd base/ left field line, if the ball hits the tree line; dead ball/out of play

Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• “Pressure in head”• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• “Don’t feel right”• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• More emotional• Confusion |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment |

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed• Vacant facial expression• Confused about assignment• Forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily or displays in-coordination• Answers questions slowly | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slurred speech• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can’t recall events prior to hit• Can’t recall events after hit• Seizures or convulsions• Any change in typical behavior or personality• Loses consciousness |
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What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon?

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport
Document created 6/15/2009

Concussion Information Sheet

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, Coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The new "Zackery Lystedt Law" in Washington now requires the consistent and uniform implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

"a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time"

and

"...may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider".

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion Remember its better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport

