



Humboldt Fastpitch Recreational

Mad River MIST Travel Softball

PO Box 4361
Arcata, CA 95518
<http://madrivergirlssoftball.blogspot.com/>



Mad River-Humboldt Girls Fastpitch Softball Association – Recreation Program

MODIFIED RULES – 8u through 16u Divisions

(2024 Board APPROVED)

All USA rules shall apply, unless modified here.

Section 1: Equipment and Playing Field

1. Balls:
 - a. 6U division shall use a 10 inch safety ball.
 - b. 8U division shall use an 11 inch safety ball.
 - c. 10U division shall use an 11 inch official softball.
 - d. 12U, 14U, & 16U divisions shall use a 12 inch official softball.
2. Bats:
 - a. The bat shall be an official USA approved softball bat.
 - b. Bats not supplied by the league shall conform to all regulations and specifications as set forth in the USA Rule Book.
3. Helmets:
 - a. It is encouraged that each player have their own helmet for hygiene purposes, however, teams will be supplied helmets if necessary. All offensive players shall wear helmets with facemasks. Chin straps are highly recommended but not required. This applies to batters, base runners, and players in the coaches' boxes. Removal of a helmet during play is a violation. Upon first violation the player shall be warned. Upon subsequent violation, the violator shall be ruled out.
 - b. Helmets that come off while running the bases shall be replaced immediately after a dead ball.
4. Facemasks:
 - a. It is encouraged that each player have their own fielder's mask for hygiene purposes, but, if not, player's who do not have their own mask, can check one out with the league. They will be solely responsible for this mask and if lost, will be financially responsible to replace it. Fielder's masks are required on defense by any first and third baseman, as well as, the pitcher.
5. Players must wear molded rubber cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are not permitted until 14u and above age divisions.
6. Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed.

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Section 2: Player Participation

1. At the 6u and 8u level, a team will consist of no more than eight (8) players unless player registration numbers dictate more. All players will be placed on the field covering infield positions including a pitcher and catcher position and any rover positions necessary for all players to be out on the field. Teams with eight (8) or more players may also play a pitcher on both sides of the coach. These players must have one foot in the pitching circle upon delivery of the pitch. A parent or coach may stand behind the catcher to assist with retrieving pitched balls. A close range centerfielder or rover may also be played behind the second base bag if agreed upon by both coaches. No players should sit out at this level. In the event a team is struggling to cover infield positions, it is not required to play with a pitcher or a catcher. 8u may also implement the pick up player policy as outlined in Section 2.6.
2. Infielders must play at least 30 feet from the home plate when the ball is pitched.
3. At the 10U level, a team will consist of ten (10) players on the field and free substitutions. Every player must play at least two (2) defensive innings and every player must bat in league participation. In the case of more than 12 players on a roster, during tournament play, the coach will do their best to abide by the two (2) defensive innings and one (1) at bat as time and the game allows.
 - a. Infielders must play at least 40 feet from the home plate when the ball is pitched.
 - b. Four players shall be outfielders. Outfielders must start in a defensive position in the grass of the outfield. No outfielder may start in a defensive position on the dirt of the field. Outfielders should be evenly spaced in the outfield, no rovers.
4. At the 12U, 14U, and 16U, teams will field nine (9) defensive players.
5. Excluding 6u and 8u, a minimum of eight (8) players is required to play at the start of game time. No out is taken for the 9th spot in the batting order.
6. Teams with seven (7) players or less on the day of a non-tournament game are encouraged to reschedule that contest, however, if, upon game time, a team is short players the following is encouraged to happen:
 - a. Implement the pick up player policy (as outlined by Section 2.6) by using a nearby athlete, or
 - b. Agree to delay the game long enough for late players to arrive, or
 - c. Promote consent of the opposing team to loan the short team enough players for the game to proceed.

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- d. If no conditions are able to be met, the game will be deemed a forfeit.
 - i. If the game is deemed a forfeit a non-binding scrimmage may be played on the scheduled field with concurrence of both coaches.
 - ii. The umpire(s) will leave the field upon declaration of the forfeit.
The umpire has no more jurisdiction at that point and should have no input on the actions of the teams.
7. Pick up players may be utilized for teams that are short players. Players deemed as pick up players must be found from a lower age division to participate. For example, if a 14/16U team is short players, they may pick up a player from the 12U age bracket to fill their team. A player who petitioned up, however, may not drop down into the lower age division as a pick up player. For example, if a 12U player successfully petitioned to play 16U that player may not drop down to 12U and play in that age division as a qualified pick up player. For tournament play, and for teams who are short players, the pick up player rule will be strictly enforced unless approved by the Humboldt Fastpitch Board.
8. Free substitution of defensive players is permitted. A player cannot sit out more than two (2) consecutive innings on defense, unless injured.
9. All players rostered on the team and in attendance to the game will be placed on the line up and will bat in the rotation as listed on the score sheet for all regular season games. For tournament play, coaches may choose to bat all players on his/her team or can select his top 9 or 10 hitters, however, every player must have at least one opportunity to bat per game and must be substituted in properly assuming time limit does not interfere with that at bat. If a player does not bat in a game, they must bat in the very next game they play. For regular season play and tournaments when coaches bat their full line-up, late arrivals will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
10. Courtesy runners are allowed as substitutions for the next inning's pitcher and catcher. Courtesy runners must be announced prior to the substitution and will be the player in the dugout who is at the bottom of the batting order at the start of the inning
11. If a player is injured during an at-bat, a substitute runner may be used for that batter after she reaches first base. The substitute runner will be the last person to make an out. If no out has been made in the inning when an injury occurs, the last person to bat in the previous inning shall be the pinch runner.

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12. Players who routinely miss practices or games, or who present disciplinary problems may lose their playing time. The coach who so disciplines a player will notify the Regional Representative of the issue prior to informing the parent. The parent must be notified at least one day prior to the game. On the day of the game, the umpire and opposing coach, at the pre-game conference, must be notified and a notation must be made on the official score sheet.

Section 3: The Game

1. Home team is responsible for notifying the visiting team of postponements or unplayable field conditions. If a game is postponed, rescheduling is the responsibility of the home team. Reschedules must be run through the area Regional Representative for confirmation of the reschedule and umpire assignment.
2. Games will be limited to the following inning and time limits:
 - a. 6U and 8U Division: 4 innings or 1 hour time limit. No new inning may start after 1 hour.
 - b. 10U Division: 6 innings or 1 hour and 15 minute time limit. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 10 minutes even in tournament play.
 - c. 12U, 14U, & 16U Division: 7 innings or 1 hour and 30 minute time limit. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 20 minutes.
 - d. All age groups will have **ONE MINUTE** to transition from offense to defense and vice versa, once the third out is made. The umpire has the right to begin calling balls and strikes for or against teams who have not met the time requirement.
3. The umpire will keep the official time. The starting time will be written at the top of the score sheet.
4. In case of a late start due to a previous game or other circumstances, the starting time will be determined by the umpire in coordination with the coaches. Late starts for other reasons are permitted at the discretion of the umpire.
5. Lineups will be turned in to the umpire and opposing coach 5 minutes before game time.
6. Batting and infield practice will be allowed at the discretion of umpires.
7. Run limits:
 - a. The number of runs a 6U and 8U Division team can score per inning is limited to the number of runners who can cross the plate during that team's batting rotation.

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- b. A three (3) up rule will be in effect for all 10u Division games. No additional runs will be counted.
 - c. A five (5) up rule will be in effect for all 12U, 14U and 16U Division games; No additional runs will be counted.
8. The scheduled home team will designate the official scorekeeper for the game but field prep and clean up will be a cooperative effort between home and away teams. Home team will provide a brand new game ball while the visiting team will provide a gently used ball.

Section 4: Pitching Regulations

1. Pitching distance will be:
 - a. 25 feet in the 6U division and is coach pitch.
 - b. 30 feet in the 8U division and is coach pitch.
 - c. 35 feet in the 10U division.
 - d. 40 feet in the 12U division
 - e. 43 feet in the 14U & 16U division.
2. USA pitching rules will be enforced in all divisions. These include, stepping onto the mound with hands apart, stationary feet on or near the pitching plate to start the pitch, and both hands coming together after taking the signal but prior to beginning the pitching motion. Pitchers may not take signals with their hands together while on the mound.
3. Innings limit for pitchers:
 - a. 6U: No player pitchers will be utilized. Coach pitch will be utilized. Players will get three opportunities to see a live pitch before the tee will be implemented for the batter to use. The batter will get two chances off the tee to be successful as a batter.
 - b. 8U Division: Using a player pitcher at this level is at the coach's discretion and no umpire will be utilized. If a player pitcher is used, she gets two attempted pitches per batter from the 30 feet distance prior to the coach coming in to pitch. If more than one pitcher, it is advised that they rotate between batters in an inning. Once the player is done with her pitches, the coach will pitch from the 30 foot distance and deliver three (3) more pitches. If after a total of five (5) pitches, the batter is unsuccessful, the coach may side toss twice and/or use a T once in an attempt to make the batter successful. No pitcher at this level may pitch more than two consecutive innings. The strike zone for coach-thrown pitches is the same

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for player-thrown pitches. Foul balls thrown by the coach will count. When pitching, the coach must make every attempt to stay clear of the defensive players after the ball has been hit. If the coach becomes an unintentional factor in the play of the game, the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be awarded first base and any runner forced to advance a base may advance. Runners not forced should return to the base last touched before the interference occurred. If the coach intentionally interferes with the play, the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be called out. The intent of the coach-pitch rule is to provide each batter with hittable pitches to promote swinging and hitting and to avoid “walk-athons” at the higher levels of play. The defensive team will be encouraged to make as many outs during the offensive team’s batting rotation. The last offensive player will be encouraged to “*run a home run*” (aka *home run trot*) at the end of the batting cycle before the teams rotate offense/defense.

- c. 10U Division: Pitchers are limited to TWO full innings per game. When the pitcher reaches four balls, the coach will pitch from the area of the pitching circle. Upon delivery of the coach pitch, the player pitcher must have one foot within the circle. The coach will pick up the strike count on the batter and finish the batter’s at bat with either a ball put in play or a strike out as deemed by the umpire. Coach is limited to four total pitches to finish the batter’s at bat. In the meantime, field play will “freeze” until the pitcher returns to the pitching position for the next batter. If after four pitches, no ball is put in play, the batter is out. The umpire will stay and count the pitches thrown by the coach as no walks will be allowed, no runners will be allowed to advance, and no dropped 3rd strike rule applies while the coach is on the mound pitching to his/her batter. When pitching, the coach must make every attempt to stay clear of the defensive players after the ball has been hit. If the coach becomes an unintentional factor in the play of the game, the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be awarded first base and any runner forced to advance a base may advance. Runners not forced should return to the base last touched before the interference occurred. If the coach intentionally interferes with the play, the ball will be declared dead and the batter will be called out. The intent of the coach-pitch rule is to provide each batter with hittable pitches to promote swinging and hitting and to avoid “walk-athons” while allowing

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pitchers an opportunity to experience success while learning the skill of pitching.

- d. In the 12U division, pitchers are limited to three (3) consecutive innings at a time. Coaches must try all qualified pitchers during a game before returning to the pitcher who had their three consecutive innings. If a young pitcher walks five (5) consecutive batters, she may be switched out by another qualified pitcher who is waiting for her three consecutive innings. During tournament play there are no pitching restrictions.
 - e. In the 14/16U division, there are no pitching restrictions. Pitching is at the discretion of the coach.
4. A 16 foot diameter circle around the pitcher's mound shall be in effect to determine time-out and dead ball situations.
 5. For age groups 10U, 12U, 14U, and 16U, a dropped 3rd strike is a live play situation;
 - a. For 10U, the batter and baserunners may advance as defined by the Mad River-Humboldt Fastpitch League Rules (See Section 5.3.b)
 - b. For 12U, 14U, and 16U the batter and base runners may advance as defined by USA Rules.

Section 5: Batting and Baserunning

1. For 6U and 8U, each team will bat their full line up per half inning regardless of the number of outs the defensive team earns during that half inning, however, if an out is made, the player deemed out will clear the bases. The last batter in the line up and all baserunners on base will transition the inning by running all the way around the bases to home plate prior to switching to defense. This activity is deemed "*the homerun trot.*"
2. For 10U, 12U, 14U, and 16U, bunting is permitted.
3. Stealing:
 - a. Is NOT permitted in 6U and 8U. Emphasis should be on learning leading off base mechanics.
 - b. Is permitted in 10u. Stealing on the pitch can only be done one base at a time even if a bad throw occurs on the play; any runner advancing to the next base on a steal from a bad throw will be sent back to the previous base. There will be no stealing home so catchers can be developed without the pressure of having to hold a runner on 3rd base. If bases are loaded, a dropped 3rd strike results in an out of the batter.

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- c. Is permitted in 12U, 14U, and 16u. Stealing home is allowed.
 - d. USA regulations state that runners can leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
4. A batter must make a reasonable effort to avoid being hit by a pitched ball. An award of 1st base is not automatic and is at the discretion of the umpire.
5. Throwing a bat will not be allowed. The batter and team will be warned after the first infraction. A second infraction will result in a dead ball play and the batter will be called out. Repeated infractions by the same player may result in ejection from the game at the discretion of the umpire.
6. Ball four situations at the 12U, 14U, and 16U levels: The ball is live and the batter/runner is entitled to advance to first base and may continue to 2nd base if not stopped by the defense. They can continue to 2nd at their own risk regardless of the actions of the defense, as long as they don't violate the "look back" rule as defined by USA Rules. At 10U, ball four situations result in only one base.

Sportsmanship

1. Absolutely no arguing with the umpires. Umpires are a valuable part of running our organization and should be considered team members in the same regard as Humboldt Fastpitch coaches, parents, spectators, volunteers, and players.
2. Conduct of **ALL** participants will be consistent with the "*Player and Parent Expectations*" and "*Coaches Expectations*" signed at beginning of the season.
3. Players, parents, coaches, and spectators will conduct themselves in a manner respectful to the league which includes their opponents, coaches, umpires, spectators, and volunteers who run the organization. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be grounds for removal from the game and/or the league. Any reported incident will be investigated and put up for review to our Disciplinary Committee who will make a ruling decision on the incident in question. An appeal process will be available to the Executive Board upon request.
4. No bantering, teasing, or foul language of any kind will be tolerated from players, coaches, or spectators. After a warning, the umpire may eject the offender from the game. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, assistant coaches, and spectators. In rare cases, offenders may be escorted away from the field by league volunteers or public service authorities.
5. If a player or coach is ejected from a game, he or she shall remain out of sight and sound of the game with one exception: if the player is the daughter of the coach and no other parent or guardian on site, that player will remain quietly in

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the dug out for the duration of the game. Failure to comply shall result in termination of the game and forfeiture to the opposing team.

6. A coach or player ejected from a game will be ineligible for the team's next game. After a second ejection in the season, the coach will be removed from his/her position for the remainder of the season, including playoffs and tournaments. That removal may carry over into future seasons.
7. The League President and Umpire in Chief shall be notified by the umpire of any ejection or significant disruptive incident after the game.

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