



2021 YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULEBOOK

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WELCOME to the SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD USA Softball program! You have chosen to become involved in a softball program in which the most important goal is to provide the highest quality recreational experience possible, and we are committed to serving the player's needs!

The Springfield-Greene County Park Board encourages participation by everyone in all activities. If you have a disability and need individual accommodations to participate in an activity, please contact Sheri Davis at 837-5808 at least one week prior to the date of participation.

All youth softball teams registered with the **Springfield-Greene County Park Board Leagues** will be registered with USA Softball as a team. If you desire to have insurance for players and coaches, teams must individually register their players. (See insurance and individual registration section of this rule book)

Founded in 1933,  USA Softball is the National Governing Body Softball in the United States and a member of the United States Olympic Committee. One of the nation's largest sports organizations, USA Softball sanctions competition in every state through a network of 74 local associations and has grown from a few hundred teams in the early days to over 165,000 teams today, representing a membership of more than 2.5 million. USA is responsible for training, equipping and promoting the six USA Softball National Teams that compete in international and domestic competitions. The USA Softball Women's National Team is one of only two women's sports involved in the Olympic movement to capture three consecutive gold medals at the Olympic Games since 1996. The U.S. women have also won nine World Championship titles as well as claimed eight World Cup of Softball titles.

NOTICE:

Check and make copies for your parents, The Youth Sport Parent Information at the back of the manual.

Weather Hotline Telephone Number: 864-1379. Including your up-to-the-minute details on weather-related cancellations. Rain make-ups will be posted at www.eteamz.com/parkboard.

Choose between 4 one-day tournaments and the MO ASA/USA 10U State Modified tournament. Just visit our Tournament Web Page at www.springfieldsoftball.com

Visit the Springfield-Greene County Park Board Web Site at www.parkboard.org to get your schedules and to see league standings.

ACE CERTIFICATION, INSURANCE AND INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION

- **One coach on every team must be certified** through the USA Softball ACE Certification program which includes a background check (more than one coach is recommended). ACE Certified coaches will receive **FREE** tickets into all of their games. All additional coaches (or any parent that assists in the dugout) must be background checked.
- **(BEST DEAL) PROTECT YOUR PLAYERS with 2020 Missouri USA Softball Team Individual Registration:** \$2,000,000 General Liability, \$250,000 Excess Accident Medical Limit, USA Softball Membership Card, all coaches receive a rule book. Individual registration is required if you plan on playing in any USA Softball qualifying tournaments. Cost with \$250 deductible is \$12 per individual including coaches
- **Weekend Only Registration Form:** This form is only for teams that wish to register for only one Missouri USA Softball sanctioned event. This form may be used to properly register, and be covered by USA Softball insurance for a single weekend tournament only (3-day maximum). While a team may use this form for more than one weekend/tournament, team managers are urged to register individually, which covers your team for USA Softball and other organizations softball events. Can be used for the Missouri USA Softball 10U Modified State tournament held this year in Springfield.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- The age determination date for the **Springfield-Greene County Park Board Recreation Leagues** is **December 31, 2020**. (Example: if you wish to play in the 12 & under division, you cannot be 13 on January 1, 2021.) This is also the same age determination date if you plan on playing in USA Softball qualifiers such as National Qualifiers, State, Regional or Nationals.
- **Roster forms MUST** be turned into the softball office or to the umpire by your first game in order to avoid a forfeited game.
- **Additions to the roster** must be placed on the add-on roster form and turned into your umpire or complex manager.
- **SUSPENSIONS:** There is no place for unsportsmanlike conduct in youth sports. Our leagues are designed with the purpose of encouraging kids to be active and develop a knowledge base and love for sports. Calls and decisions may not go in favor of your team, but we ask you to be respectful of all players, spectators and sports officials. Please review the following:
 - Ejections by an umpire or a member of the sports staff will be final.
 - If you are ejected from a game, you are required to leave the complex immediately. (Must be outside the complex fence). You are allowed to wait in the parking lot for your player(s)
 - If ejected from a league game, you will receive an automatic 2 WEEK suspension. To avoid 1 week of suspension, you will be allowed to officiate a game with a qualified official for (1) full night of play.
 - Multiple ejections could result in a longer suspension.
 - Coaches may be ejected because of the actions of team followers.

II. LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

- Rain make-ups will be scheduled weeknights OR weekends. Please check the big board at your complex and they will be posted www.parkboard.org.
- If for some reason you cannot field a team for a certain night, please contact the office so we can contact the opposing team. If excessive forfeits occur, a team can be dropped.
- **RE-ENTRY FEES:** A softball team that forfeits a game must pay a re-entry fee in order to remain in the league. The re-entry fee is \$25.00 for each forfeit. This fee must be paid by 5:00 p.m. the second business day following the forfeited game. If the fee is not paid by the deadline, that team's opponent for the following week will be granted a win by forfeit for its next scheduled game. We will not wait past the deadline to notify your next opponent, and once that call is made, the game will not be rescheduled.
- **EXCEPTION: A re-entry fee will not be charged to a team that forfeits and has notified the softball office by 12:00 noon on the day the team intends to forfeit.**
- **LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP TIE BREAKERS:** The softball staff will determine league winners. If a two-way tie exists, the winner will be determined by head-to-head competition. If more than two teams are involved in a tie or on a two-way tie can't be determined, the winner will be determined using the following tie-breakers:
 - a) Head to head competition.
 - b) The teams shall be ranked according to the fewest runs allowed per game played.
 - c) If a tie still exists, the teams shall be ranked by most runs scored per game played.
 - d) If a tie still exists, by a coin toss.

III. GENERAL RULES

- Game Time is forfeit time except for a 10-minute grace period on the first game of the night (this does not include weekends). Turn in line-up cards 10 minutes prior to the start of your game.
- **HOME OR VISITOR:** Home and visitor will be listed on the schedule. Home team assumes the 3rd base dugout and visitors assume the 1st base dugout.
- **No New Inning will begin** after 55 minutes (when the clock shows 00) for coach and one hour ten minutes (when the clock shows 00) for fast pitch & modified pitch softball.
- **Time runs out when the clock shows zero (00):**
 - a. Home team is batting and ahead the game is over
 - b. Home team is batting and is behind by more than 5 runs the game is over.
 - c. Visitor team is batting and ahead by more than 5 runs the game is over.
 - d. Visitor team is batting and is ahead by 5 or fewer runs the game continues until the home teams finishes last bats.
- **A team MUST have 6 players to start or finish a game.** If additional players arrive, she may be added in the batting line-up, and is eligible to play.
- **All players present will bat** and everyone is required to play at least one inning in the field (Exception: High School FP Exception).

- **For all leagues, there will be a 5-run-per-inning run.** After 5 runs have been scored, the teams will exchange offense and defense (Exception: High School exceptions).
- **For all leagues, there will be a RUN AHEAD RULE.** This will be 15 after 3 innings, 12 after four innings, and 8 after 5 innings. This includes leagues using the 5-run-per-innings rule.
- In the event of rain, it is a complete game if 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team ahead) or 40 minutes are played; otherwise the game is re-scheduled from the beginning.
- **Lightning/Inclement Weather Policy for Games.** If during pre-game warm-ups or game play, lightning is showing to be within a distance of 0-8 miles from the complex, the following procedures will take effect:
 - All on field activities will be suspended immediately and everyone must leave the field and dugout for a safe location such as a car or shelter.
 - There will be a delay of thirty (30) minutes after every lightning indicator within the 0-8-mile range.
 - If the game has not started at the time of the delay, and the thirty (30) minute delay does not push the starting time back, the game may begin when the weather is clear of the area.
 - If the game has already begun at the time of the lightning delay, that game will be stopped and either marked as an official game or rescheduled depending on the innings/clock. this is done to ensure that the rest of the night's games will begin on time.
- No uniform requirements.
- **All outfielders must remain in the grass portion of the field until the ball is hit.**
- **The Courtesy Runner Rule for the pitcher or catcher on base is permitted in fast pitch softball leagues. (Note: runner must be the player who made the last out)**
- It is required of all teams to have an USA Softball **ACE** certified coach present at all Springfield-Greene County Park Board league games. **All other adult personnel in the dugout must have been background checked by the Park Board.**
- At the beginning of the game, in between innings or when the current pitcher is replaced, the pitcher shall receive no more than three (3) pitches and must be finished in a one-minute time limit. Excess throws count as balls to the next batter.
- "Non-Collision Rule" when the ball is **caught by the fielder** and is in close proximity of any base/plate and in the umpire's discretion a play is eminent, it is the responsibility of the runner to avoid collision with the fielder either by sliding or avoiding the tag. If in the umpire's discretion, the collision is deliberate/malicious the runner will be called out. If in the umpire's discretion the collision is malicious, the player will be called out and ejected from the game. This is not a must slide rule but a non-collision rule. ***In some cases contact will be unavoidable. In those cases, it shall be the decision of the umpire to rule as such.***

- **BASE LENGTHS, PITCHING DISTANCES, & MAX INNINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS**

Age	Base	Pitching	Time	Innings	Clock Starting	Max Runs Per Inning
8U CP	60'	35'	60 min	6 max	55 min	5
10U CP	60'	35'	60 min	6 max	55 min	5
10 MOD	60'	35'	75 min	6 max	70 min	5
10 FP	60'	35'	75 min	6 max	70 min	5
12U FP	60'	40'	75 min	6 max	70 min	5
14U FP	60'	43'	75 min	7 max	70 min	5
H.S. FP	60'	43'	75 min	7 max	70 min	n/a

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

ATTENTION ALL LEAGUES: Teams are responsible to provide their own equipment for the league. The Park Board does not supply any equipment.)

- **SOFTBALL:** Softballs do not need to be new, they do need to have a legible ASA Emblem on them.

Coach-Pitch: 11-inch optic yellow cover red stitched softball with a ASA Emblem on it. Softballs may be .47/375 or .52/300. Softballs can be any brand (Dudley, Worth, etc.).

Modified Fast Pitch: 11-inch optic yellow cover red stitched softball with a ASA Emblem on it. Softballs may be .47/375 or .52/300. Softballs can be any brand (Dudley, Worth, etc.).

Fast Pitch: 12-inch optic yellow cover red stitched softball with a ASA Emblem on it. Softballs will be .47/375. Softballs can be any brand (Dudley, Worth, etc.).

HELMETS: offensive players (to include on-deck batters) must wear batting helmets with double earflaps. According to the USA Softball rulebook, all fast pitch teams shall have helmets equipped with a NOCSAE approved face-mask/guard. This rule includes Coach Pitch Leagues. **Chin Straps are no longer required but are recommended if the helmet does not fit snug to the participant's head.**

- **HEADWEAR:** plastic visors are not allowed.
- **EXPOSED JEWELRY:** judged by the umpire to be dangerous may not be worn. Earrings, rings, bracelets and necklaces are not permitted. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are allowed.
- **For Coach Pitch: CATCHERS** must wear approved double ear-flapped catcher's helmet with a mask. **Fast Pitch: CATCHERS** must wear approved double ear-flapped catcher's helmet with a mask, shin guards and body protector.
- Metal cleats/spikes **ARE NOT** allowed in any youth league except for the GFP 14U and High School age divisions.
- All equipment requirements follow USA guidelines. Baseball & tee up bats are NOT permitted. Warm up donuts are not allowed but warm up bat sleeves are permitted.

COACH PITCH EXCEPTIONS

- No more than one (1) defensive coach may stand down the left or right field lines, in foul territory, to help instruct their fielders.
- A player must be in position by the opponent's coach/pitcher in order to field the balls hit to the pitcher's position. They must have at least one foot inside the circle but may move outside the circle once the ball is hit.
- The coach shall pitch to his/her own players. They must stay on the pitcher's plate. The coach may not field the ball but may defend themselves on a ball hit back directly towards them.
- **(Further Explanation of a Rule)** each batter will receive only 5 pitches. The batter CANNOT be walked; however, she can strike out. Bunting and squeeze plays are not allowed.
- All outfielders must remain in the grass portion of the field until the ball is hit.
- **STEALING** is not permitted in Coach Pitch Softball.
- The Infield Fly Rule does not apply in coach pitch leagues.
- **All batters must stop at third base** on all hits and overthrows. All *base runners* must then be hit-in by the next batter that is up to bat. Once on base, *base runners* may advance all the way to home on a hit.
- 8U Coach Pitch: ***Throwing the ball back to the coach inside the circle area of the pitchers plate will result in the play being called dead and will stop the play.***
- 10U Coach Pitch: ***Throwing the softball back to the pitching coach does not stop the play. We believe in teaching the children the proper way to stop the runners by throwing ahead of them. The umpire will then call "Time" when they determine that play has stopped.***

10 & UNDER MODIFIED PITCH EXCEPTIONS

- All players begin with 10U player pitch rules. Only **5 run per inning**. There are **NO WALKS**. When 4 balls are called on the batter, the previous **coach pitch rules will apply** as follows:
 - a) Coaches pitch to their batters and must pitch from the 35' pitchers plate. The fielder must stay inside the circle.
 - b) The maximum # of pitches from the coach is 4 minus the # of strikes called. (Example: 2 strikes, then 2 pitches only and if the players swing at the 1st pitch and misses, then this is the 3rd strike.) If the adult pitcher fields the ball the player is declared out.
- **All batters must stop at third base** on all hits and overthrows. Once on base, *base runners* may advance all the way to home on a hits and overthrows.
- Stealing is allowed when the player is pitching. A base runner may steal one (1) base per pitch once the ball is released. (We encourage teaching the catcher to throw to the base.)
- Stealing is not allowed when the coach is pitching.
- Bunting is allowed while the player is pitching, however, only one bunt per inning will be allowed per team. A Bunt: a pitched ball that intentionally tapped with the bat, slowly, within the infield.

- Advanced players might perform a slap hit, which is the same as a slap bunt except the player swings through to place the ball in an infield hole or over the infielders' heads.
- There will be no infield fly rule.
- Follow 10 & Under Fast Pitch Rules when player is pitching and Coach Pitch rules when coach is pitching.

10 & UNDER FAST PITCH EXCEPTIONS

- Defensive coaches may stand down the left or right field lines, in foul territory, to help instruct their fielders.
- A player on base may **ONLY** steal one base per pitch. If the catcher throws down and overthrows the base, the runner must stay at the base and may not steal another base until the next pitch.
- If a player walks to first base, they are not permitted to immediately steal 2nd base.
- A batter can't advance to 1st base on a drop third strike.

HIGH SCHOOL AGE FAST PITCH LEAGUE EXCEPTIONS

- Batters are required to take her position within 10-seconds after the ball is returned to the pitcher.
- The 15-after-3, 12-after-4, and 8-after-5 run rule by USA Softball applies.
- NOTE: All rules not listed in this book can be found in the USA Softball rulebook.
- **Wednesday** night High School Age Fast Pitch Leagues will follow...
 - 1) All USA Softball rules apply for line up and substitutions.
 - 2) Pitchers must keep **both feet** on the **rubber** and only **step toward the batter**.
 - 3) Players are **ALLOWED** to wear metal cleats and metal toe plates.
 - 4) Batters and base-runners must have helmets with face guard.

ILLEGAL SOFTBALL BATS

- Please visit the certified equipment section of www.teamusa.com.

CITY ORDINANCES

1. By City Ordinance, possession of alcoholic beverages on public property is prohibited! This includes all parks and parking lots! Teams or individuals will be penalized for failure to comply.
2. By City Ordinance, skateboards, roller-skates/blades, bicycles and refreshment coolers (except water coolers) are NOT permitted inside the complexes.
3. All players, coaches, and team followers assume all risk of accident and injury arising out of participation in the Springfield-Greene County Park Board Girls' Softball Leagues.
4. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and American Disabilities Act of 1991, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board.
5. **Smoking, roller skates and boards, inline skates; ROLLER SCOOTERS bicycles and alcohol are not permitted inside the complexes.**

General Ordinance #5197 (Offenses Related to Sporting Events)

Section #1: The term "Sports Official" means any referee, umpire, scorekeeper, timekeeper, field or arena security personnel, field or arena manager or person serving in a similar management or supervisory capacity.

Section #2: Assault on sports official.

Section #3: Harassment of a sports official.

Section #4: Peace disturbance at a sports event.

Section #5: Property damage related to a sporting event.

Section #6: Trespass at a sporting event.

Section #7: Penalty Clause. Any person found guilty of violating this ordinance shall be penalized in accordance with Section 1 – 7 of the Springfield City Code.

YOUTH SPORT PARENT

Being a Model Youth League Parent

The primary objective of this sports program is to provide a fun, positive, safe learning experience for everyone involved. To accomplish this objective we will need the assistance and understanding of every parent.

A MESSAGE FROM THE LEAGUE

Welcome to the Springfield-Greene County Park Board youth softball leagues. The primary objective of this youth sports program is to provide a fun, positive, safe learning experience for everyone involved. To accomplish this objective we will need the assistance and understanding of every parent.

There is currently a major problem occurring in youth sports. These involve win-at-all-cost coaches, overzealous parents and unruly spectators because they are pushing kids from playing fields in alarming numbers. Sports are the greatest tool we have in today's society to help children develop positive character traits and life values. However, when the focus shifts from what is best for young participants to what's best for others that is when major problems begin.

What's a parent to do? Research shows the value of youth sports. The four cornerstones of self-esteem can be enhanced through youth sports: a sense of belonging, a sense of feeling worthwhile as a person, a sense of dignity, and a sense of control. Research also shows the longer kids play sports, the better their chance of staying in school, getting better grades, and having fewer behavior problems. Positive parent support has been found as one of the major reasons why kids join, and continue to play, youth sports.

We want what you and your child wants. Specifically, an opportunity to learn, grow, develop skills, meet new friends, and experience the excitement and fun that participation in youth sports has to offer.

Tips on Becoming a Model Youth Sport Parent

- Remember that where we practice & play games is like your child's classroom – respect the classroom.
- Make only positive, encouraging comments to the players on both teams.
- Remember, making mistakes is part of the learning process – don't criticize.
- Discuss your concerns away from the players and in particular, away from your child.
- Respect the Officials.
- Focus on fun and participation rather than winning or losing.
- Ask your child if they had fun. Then ask why or why not?
- Control your emotions.
- Get interested in your child's sport and participate in team activities.
- Learn the rules of your child's sport.
- Make every effort to get your child to practice on time.
- Reinforce the coaches instructions when practicing with your child at home.
- Positive reinforcement is the key to improvement.
- Don't undermine team morale.
- Let the coach know if your child will be missing practice or a game.
- Pick your child up promptly after practice and games.
- Remember that tobacco and alcohol use at the complexes are not permitted – remember this is your child's classroom.