

# Thurston County Fastpitch Association

## Rule Modifications and Points of Emphasis

The following rules are to be used in addition to or in modification of the USSSA rules that govern play with Thurston County Fastpitch Association (TCFA). TCFA Rule Modifications are broke down by division.

The following points of emphasis are USSSA rules in which TCFA deems relevant to draw further attention. Refer to the USSSA rule book for further clarification.

### The Playing Field

8U Field measurements shall be:

home to second base	77 feet
distance between bases	55 feet
home to pitchers mound	35 feet
batting arc	9 feet

10U field measurements shall be:

home to second base	84 feet
distance between bases	60 feet
home to pitchers mound	35 feet

12U, 14U, 16U, 18U field measurements shall be:

home to second base	84 feet 10 ¼ inches
distance between bases	60 feet
home to pitchers mound	40 feet for 12U and 43 feet for all others

**If a rule is not listed in the TCFA Rule Modifications, the governing rules of USSSA will apply.**

### **Disciplinary**

All players and coaches will be expected to behave in a sportsman like manner at all times. Any player, coach or parent / fan whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive will at a minimum be warned and may be removed from the playing field or stands at the discretion of the Umpire. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This includes a team forfeiting or being removed if necessary.

Information on further disciplinary action and Grievances can be found in the TCFA Bylaws in Article XIII.

### **Equipment**

Catchers must wear a mask with throat protector, approved helmet with earflaps, shin guards which offer protection to the kneecaps and body protector. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector.

Offensive players, including the on-deck batter, must properly wear double earflap NOCSAE-approved batting helmets with mask and chin straps.

Defensive players at the 1<sup>st</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base and pitching positions must wear a field mask.

### **Softball Size**

8U An 11" approved "safety" softball will be used.

10U An 11" yellow color ball shall be used.

12U/14U A 12" yellow color ball shall be used.

### **Courtesy Runners**

The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher at anytime. TCFA encourages full participation for all players and does not require the coaches to utilize this rule.

### **Pitching Regulations**

Will be per USSSA rule for all age divisions outlined below.

**For the full pitching rule, please refer to the USSSA Rule book - Rule Pitching, Sec 1.E.3 pages 34-35**

The Pitch:

1. The pitch begins and cannot be discontinued when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.
2. Any step back with the non-pivot foot must begin before the start of the pitch. Once the pitch has started (the hands separate), the pitcher shall take not more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery.
3. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate or be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground.

NOTE: It is not a step if the pitcher slides their pivot foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.

The pitcher's push off to drag must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate.

### **Rainouts**

Please refer to TCFA Bylaws, Section XV

### **Umpires**

**If an umpire is unavailable from the umpire's association, the Home team is responsible for supplying a "volunteer" umpire. Teams are encouraged to recruit knowledgeable parents, current high school players or others with basic knowledge of the game.**

## **8U Rule Modifications**

### **Rule 1. Field Coaches**

- Section 1. The defensive team may have two field coaches on the field while playing defense. Offense is allowed a first base coach and third base coach. One coach may assist a child at bat. No other coaches or parents are allowed on the field during the games.
- Section 2. Coaches may not physically assist players in making plays or base running. If a coach assists a player on defense, the opposing team player will be called safe regardless of the play and the coach will be warned. If the coach assists the defensive player again, the coach will leave the field and the team will only be allowed one field coach. If the coach assists a baserunner, the player is called out.

### **Rule 2. The Game**

- Section 1. The game shall consist of no more than 5 innings. A “4 run or 3 out” rule shall be in effect for the entire game. A “ten-run” rule shall apply after four complete innings. Five complete innings or reaching time limit constitutes a complete game. Time limit is 1 hour and 15 minutes. An inning can be completed but no new inning may begin after the time limit. Regular scheduled weekday games will begin at 6:15 p.m.
- Section 2. Umpires: Both teams will be required to provide a knowledgeable person (coach or other) to act as umpire for the game. There is not an umpire behind the plate because we do not call balls and strikes.
- Acting umpire from Home team, stands between 1st and 2nd and is responsible for calls on that side of the diamond including first and second base and is responsible for keeping a pitch count.
  - The acting umpire from Visitor team, stands between 2nd and 3rd near the shortstop and is responsible for calls on that side of the diamond including home plate and 3rd base.
  - The two can confer if there is a disagreement or not certain of a call.
  - Calls include outs at the bases, ensure runners stop when appropriate and ensure the game proceeds as it should.
  - 8U may keep score. The official score book is kept by the home team to reflect the game scores. Scores will not be recorded on the TCFA website.
  - There would be no league awards for season play. League awards for 8U will be earned through our end of year tournament.
- Section 3. There will not be walks or strike-outs in 8U.

- Section 4. Each batter will get **no more than 5 pitches** from their respective coaches. If the batter does not hit a fair ball with these pitches, the batting “Tee” **must** be used. Any ball hit in fair territory during the coach pitch will be considered a fair ball if it travels past the 9-foot arc. If a ball hit off the batting “Tee” does not travel beyond the 9-foot arc, it constitutes a dead ball. The batter will hit again.
- Section 5. Base runners may **NOT** advance on overthrows that go out of the field of play, the ball is dead. On overthrows in the field of play, the baserunner may advance to the base that he/she is moving toward and no further. The ball is dead.
- Section 6. Base runners may advance only when the ball is hit. No stealing or leading off is allowed. One warning will be given to each team by the umpire.
- Section 7. If batting off the “Tee”, the ball is dead on a tube hit. A bat thrown will result in a warning to that team. A subsequent thrown bat will result in an out for that batter – no exception.
- Section 8. The pitcher must remain with at least one foot inside the pitching circle until the ball is hit off the pitched ball or the “Tee”. **The coach pitcher must pitch from inside the pitching circle.**
- Section 10. Each team will bat their entire line-up. If a player does not bat due to an injury, it does not count as an out.
- Teams will not be required to take an out in the lineup for any number of players below 10 unless a player is sitting due to a disciplinary reason.
- Teams may and are encouraged to share players with the other team to bring the number of players up to a maximum of 10 if players are available.
- Section 11. Sliding is allowed as player feels comfortable and safely executes sliding. USSSA sliding rules are in effect.
- Section 12. Players shall assume normal softball positions. It is the expectation that every team play with 10 defensive players if players are available. A team may play the game with no less than 7 players and up to a maximum of 10 defensive players in the field. If 10 players are available, four will be outfielders. Outfielders must play a minimum of ten feet behind the base paths.
- Section 13. **Each player MUST rotate to different positions during each game and will include an infield position and outfield position. Players will play in different positions throughout the season (i.e., Susie plays 1<sup>st</sup> inning at pitcher, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> inning at center field, and in the next game she**

**plays 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> inning at 3<sup>rd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> inning in left field, etc.).** The purpose of this rule is to allow a beginning player an opportunity to experience each position on the field.

Section 14. Each eligible player **MUST** play a minimum of 2 innings on defense. To be considered eligible, players must attend practices. If the player will miss a practice they must alert the coach in advance. Coaches will keep record of practice attendance.

**Rule 3. Batting “Tee”**

Section 1 Home team shall supply the batting “tee”.

Section 2. The coach shall remove the batting “Tee” immediately after the ball has been hit. This will prevent the batting “Tee” from becoming a hazard to the players. The bat shall be removed from the immediate playing area by the coach.

## 10U Rule Modifications

### Rule 1. The Game

Section 1. The game shall consist of 7 innings. A “4 run or 3 out” rule shall be in effect for the first 3 innings. The last four innings shall be “open”. Five complete innings or reaching time limit constitutes a complete game. **Time limit is 1 hour and 15 minutes.** An inning can be completed but no new inning may begin after this time limit. Regular scheduled weekday games will begin at 6:30 p.m.

The run rule will be 10 runs after 4 innings and 8 runs after 5 innings.

Section 2. There is a “NO-walk” rule. Each inning will start with a player pitcher using normal pitching rules. If a pitcher throws four called balls to a batter and the batter does not strike out or hit the ball, the pitcher steps to the side of the pitcher’s rubber within the pitching circle and assumes a defensive position. The coach from the batter’s team then comes out to pitch from the pitching circle as many pitches as there are strikes left in the hitters count, unless the batter strikes out or gets a hit.

#### **Examples**

***Batter has no strikes, the coach gets a maximum of three pitches***

***Batter has one strike, the coach gets a maximum of two pitches***

***Batter has two strikes, the coach pitches a maximum of one pitch***

The batter retains her strike count from the original pitcher and strikes are still called by the umpire while the coach is pitching. If after the additional pitches from the coach, the batter has not reached base by hitting the ball, being hit by a pitched ball or has not struck out swinging, she returns to the bench and her turn at bat is scored an out. **The coach will continue to pitch to the batter after the maximum number of pitches have been pitched only IF the batter fouls off the last pitch.**

Section 3. **Players may bunt only when the player pitcher is pitching.** When the coach is pitching, bunting is not allowed. If a player squares to bunt, they may bunt the ball or pull back. They are not allowed to pull back and then hit or bunt the ball.

Section 4. Each pitcher is allowed to pitch only 4 innings per game. One pitch in any inning constitutes one inning.

Section 5. Each team will bat their entire line-up. If a player bats out of order, USSSA rules will be applied. If a player does not bat due to an injury, it does not count as an out unless the player is not batting due to a disciplinary issue, then it is considered an out.

Section 6. Each eligible player **MUST** play a minimum of 2 innings on defense. To be considered eligible, players must attend practices. If the player will miss a practice they must alert the coach in advance. Coaches will keep record of practice attendance.

Section 7. Players shall assume normal softball positions. It is the expectation that every team play with 9 defensive players if players are available. A team may play the game with no less than 7 players and up to a maximum of 9 defensive players in the field. If 9 players are available, three will be outfielders. **Outfielders must play a minimum of ten feet behind the base paths.**

Teams will not be required to take an out in the lineup for any number of players below 9 unless a player is sitting due to a disciplinary reason.

Teams may share players with the other team to bring the number of players up to a maximum of 9 if players are available

## **Rule 2. Base running**

Section 1. A batter may not go to first base on a dropped third strike. The ball is dead and the batter is out.

Section 2. A runner may steal as explained below:

- a. A runner on 1st or 2nd can advance/steal only one base and only when a **PLAYER** is pitching even in the event of an overthrow in live ball territory. If they advance more than one, they are liable to be put out. At end of play if the runner is safe and has advanced more than one base, the umpire will return the runner to the correct base. Runners cannot steal if coach is pitching
- b. A runner cannot steal home. If they attempt to advance home they are liable to be put out. At end of play if the runner is safe and has advanced, the umpire will return the runner to the correct base.
- c. A batter runner, who has received a base on balls, cannot attempt to steal second base.
- d. If the catcher makes an attempt to pick off a base runner at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> and overthrows the ball, the ball becomes a dead ball and the baserunner does not advance. The runner is liable to be put out if caught off base.

Section 3. Base runners may advance ONE BASE on overthrows that go out of the field of play, after which the ball is dead. Time will be called and runners may not advance when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner or the ball is returned to the player pitcher with at least foot inside the pitcher's circle.

Section 4. USSSA sliding rules are in effect.

### **Rule 3. Coach/Pitcher**

Section 1. When pitching, the coach must make every attempt to stay clear of the defensive players after the ball has been hit. If, in the umpire's judgment, the coach becomes a factor in the play of the game either through intentional or unintentional interference, the ball is declared dead and the batter will be called out.

Section 2. If a batter is struck by a pitch thrown by the coach, the batter hit must take first base unless the umpire disallows any action by the batter and coach-pitcher that appears to take advantage of their relationship beyond the specific intent of this rule The intent of the coach-pitch rule is to provide each batter with hittable pitches to promote swinging and hitting and to avoid "walk-a-thons".

The umpire can disallow any actions by the batter and coach-pitcher that appears to take advantage of their relationship beyond the specific intent of this rule.

### **12U Rule Modifications**

#### **Rule 1. The Game**

Section 1 The game shall consist of 7 innings. A "4 run or 3 out" rule shall be in effect for the first 3 innings. The last four innings shall be "open". Four complete innings or reaching time limit constitutes a complete game. Time limit is no new inning at 1 hour and 15 minutes and game start time is 6:30. An inning can be completed but no new inning may begin after this time limit.

The run rule will be 10 runs after 4 innings and 8 runs after 5 innings.

Section 2. Each pitcher is allowed to pitch only 4 innings per game. One pitch in any inning constitutes one inning.

Section 3. Each team will bat their entire line-up. If a player bats out of order, USSSA rules will be applied. If a player does not bat due to an injury, it does not count as an out. If the player is pulled due to a disciplinary issue then their spot in the lineup is considered an out.

Section 4. Each eligible player **MUST** play a minimum of 2 innings on defense. To be considered eligible, players must attend practices. If the player will miss a practice, they must alert the coach in advance. Coaches will keep record of practice attendance.



## 14U Rule Modifications

### **Rule 1.       The Game**

Section 1.       The game shall consist of 7 innings. A “5 run or 3 out” rule shall be in effect for the first 3 innings. The last four innings shall be “open”. Four complete innings or reaching time limit constitutes a complete game. Time limit is no new inning at 1 hour and 15 minutes and game start time is 6:30. An inning can be completed but no new inning may begin after this time limit.

The run rule will be 10 runs after 4 innings and 8 runs after 5 innings.

Section 2.       Each team will bat their entire line-up. If a player bats out of order, USSSA rules will be applied. If a player does not bat due to an injury, it does not count as an out. If the player is pulled due to a disciplinary issue then their spot in the lineup is considered an out.

Section 3.       Each eligible player **MUST** play a minimum of 2 innings on defense. To be considered eligible, players must attend practices. If the player will miss a practice, they must alert the coach in advance. Coaches will keep record of practice attendance.