



Bethel Recreation Association

Girls Fast Pitch 3rd-8th Grades

GENERAL LEAGUE RULES...updated 3/13/25

The National Federation of State High School Association Softball Rules shall be used as a guideline for all other rules concerning how softball/fast pitch is to be played.

- **Please see rule changes: Game Guidelines #1 & #2 jewelry. #14 & 15- Coaches in the dugout and helmet mandate.**
- **Pitching Rule- Defense & Pitching #8**

TEAMS

1. Team rosters will be composed of girls in the following leagues 3rd & 4th, 5th, 6th - 8th.
2. Teams starting a game with less than nine (9) players must insert late arrivals at the bottom of the lineup. All players must be inserted into the lineup.
3. A team unable to field a team of at least eight (8) players at the start of the game will forfeit that game after a 10-minute grace period after the scheduled starting time. If grace period is used the game time will be cut by 10 minutes.

THE PLAYING FIELD

1. Baseline: **3rd & 4th Grades-** Fifty-foot (50') **5th -8th Grades-** Sixty-foot (60')
2. Pitching distance: **3rd – 5th Grades-** thirty five-foot (35'). **6th-8th Grades-** forty-foot (40'-43')

EQUIPMENT

1. No metal cleats will be allowed.
2. Ball- **3rd-5th** Eleven-inch (11") **6th- 8th** Twelve-inch (12") yellow fast pitch softball
3. Bats- official softball bats will be used and must be taped or wrapped at the handle. No wooden bats allowed.
4. Offensive players on the field of play batting, on deck or running bases must wear batting helmets with facemasks.
5. Catchers Gear that will be issued and must be worn by all catchers includes: catcher's helmet/mask, chest protector and shin guards.
6. The officials will provide the game balls. Each team will provide their pitchers with the back-up balls. Only players will touch the balls.
7. All players must wear their Bethel Rec. issued T-shirts or like colored shirt in its absence.
8. Illegal equipment shall be removed from the game.

GAME GUIDELINES

1. **3RD-5TH Grades-** Jewelry is prohibited. This includes earrings (taping jewelry is NOT acceptable). *Temporary plastic earring retainers can be worn in the ear in place of studs.*
2. **6TH-8TH Grades-** Jewelry that is not allowed: body piercing(s) that are dangling in nature, watches, fitness trackers, rings, claw clips, or necklaces that cannot be tucked under the participants shirt. Individuals will be allowed to tape over any piercing.
3. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible. Hard barrettes and bobby pins in the hair that are securely fastened are allowed.
4. Umpires have the authority to rule on anything that is considered a distraction or increases risk to any player.
5. A player shall not wear anything that may be dangerous to other players or themselves. This includes casts/splints, plastic face shields, etc. No player wearing a cast or splint shall be permitted to play.
6. Score and standings will be kept and it is the coach's responsibility to update their score on the Bethel Recreation website after each game.

7. The home team shall take **the third base side** of the field and visiting team 1st base side. The home team is the official scorebook and must record the time the game starts and ends.
8. Games will be postponed or canceled only by the Bethel Recreation Association Director or Field Supervisor/Adult umpire.
9. In case of BAD WEATHER coaches and parents should 1) check our website at **bethelrec.org** for updates to determine if the games will be played. We do not contact you.
10. If games have not been canceled by 4:00pm by the association both teams must appear at the game site ready to play or the non-appearing team shall forfeit the game regardless of playing conditions due to weather or otherwise. The Adult Umpire or Field Supervisor shall be the sole judge as to the condition of the field of play after 4:00pm. Games must be played as scheduled or forfeited.
11. Makeup games may be rescheduled on any day Monday through Saturday.
12. Officials- Bethel Rec. will assign one umpire for games and when possible two for 5th -8th grade games.
13. Spectators and coaches are not allowed to stand directly behind the backstop and/or the umpire.
14. Coaches (defensive and those not base coaching) are to remain on the **inside of the fenced dugouts**. If coaches interfere with play they may be warned, or asked to leave the game. Umpire discretion.
15. It is mandatory for on-deck batters, batters, runners, retired runners, players/students in the coaches boxes as well as non-adult bat/ball shaggers to **wear a batting helmet while on the field of play**.
16. CHATTERING: A "no" chattering rule will be in place for all leagues. Players in the field may not chatter while a player is at bat. Cheers may be done from the dug-out, by the team batting, as long as the cheers are positive and are not negative against the opposing team.
17. **Game Length:**
 - a. 3rd & 4th- Games are limited to six innings. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 15 minutes.
 - b. 5th-8th - Games are limited to six innings. No new inning may start after 1 hour 45 minutes.
 - c. If an inning is in progress, that inning will be played to its conclusion.
 - d. Time starts with the first pitch of the game.
 - e. If time or weather does not permit a full game, 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) shall constitute an official game.
 - f. A called game ending in a tie will remain a tie.
18. **MERCY RULES IN EFFECT:** A game will end any time after 3 innings, or after 2 ½ innings if the team is **12 or more** runs behind and has completed its turn at bat. A game will end any time after 4 innings, or after 3 ½ innings if the team is **8 or more** runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.
19. A team is allowed to score a maximum of five (5) runs in any inning until the sixth inning or last inning called by the official. In the sixth inning or last inning called by the official unlimited runs can be scored. **Please note:** Unlimited runs is not guaranteed. Some games may not have an inning with unlimited runs if time runs out.
20. Any matter not covered in these rules and regulations shall be left to the discretion of the director, supervisor or official, if one is present at your game.

PLAYING RULES

OFFENSE & BATTING

1. All players present at the game will be listed in the batting order (everyone bats).
2. When players are unable to bat due to injury, leaving or other valid reasons batters move up in the batting order and the official scorekeeper must be notified. No out is taken.
3. If a player is ejected from the game, that player will be an out in the line-up.
4. Offensive players on the field of play must wear a batting helmet.
5. Only two players may have a bat in their hand when on offense: the player up to bat and on deck.
6. No headfirst sliding. Runner will be called out. Diving back to a base is allowed.
7. Bunting- is NOT allowed for 3rd & 4th Grades. Bunting is allowed in 5th-8th Grades.
8. Base runners are NOT allowed to "take out" a defensive player who has possession of the ball. A "NO contact" rule will be enforced. Runner must make an effort to avoid fielder. If there is a close play at a base, the runner must slide OR avoid. Penalty: Runner will be out. A catcher has the right to block home plate if she is in possession of the ball or in the act of receiving the ball.
9. **Dropped third strike-**
 - 3rd - 4th Grades: The batter is automatically out.
 - 5th-8th Grades: The batter can run to first base if first base is unoccupied (at time of pitch) or there are 2 outs.

All grades- The ball is considered live and base runners may advance at their own risk.

10. **Leading off & Stealing-** Leading off is not allowed for all grades. Runners leaving early will be called out.
3rd & 4th Grades: The runner may not leave the base and attempt to steal until after the pitched ball crosses home plate.
5th-8th Grades A base runner can attempt to steal once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
11. **Stealing Home-**
3rd & 4th Grades: A runner may NOT steal home when starting from third. Runners may advance home if stealing from 1st or 2nd base if it is a continuation of a play on a live ball. Runners beginning at 3rd base can only come home if hit in, or ball out of field of play advances them in.
5th-8th Grades: runners may steal home when starting from third.
12. After a play is made, once the pitcher is in the pitcher's circle with control of the ball, the ball is termed dead and the runner must immediately return to a base, unless the pitcher makes a play with the ball. Umpire's discretion.
13. Walked runners to 1st base cannot round 1st base and run to 2nd if the pitcher is in control of the ball in the pitcher's circle.
14. Runners must slide at home if there is a close play at home. If there is no play on the runner coming home to score – catcher must get out of the way of the runner or be called for interference. Failure to slide when necessary is an out (officials' discretion – decision is final).
15. Runners who are ½ way to the base on an overthrow out of the field of play, will advance to the next base. Overthrow to 1st base moves the runner running to 1st base to second base. Overthrow to 3rd base moves the runner running to 3rd base to home and all other runners advance accordingly. The playing field should be agreed upon prior to the start of the game.
16. A batter who throws his/her bat or other equipment- Results in a team warning on the first offense. 2nd offense will result in the player being called out. This is for player safety.
17. Offense is limited to one charged conference per inning.
18. Base coaches may not make contact with runners at any time or the runner will be called out. Exception: (High fives and fist bumps are allowed after time is called).

DEFENSE & PITCHING

1. Defensively teams may use either 9 or 10 players (6 infielders & 3 or 4 outfielders).
2. Every player must play a minimum of 2 defensive innings. A player cannot sit for consecutive innings on defense.
3. Catcher – Full catcher's gear will be issued and must be worn.
4. **Infield Fly-** 3rd & 4th Grade: The infield fly rule will **NOT** be in effect. **Exception:** If a defensive player intentionally drops or intentionally doesn't catch the ball, the runners will all be safe and advance to the next base. (Umpire discretion). 5th -8th Grade: Infield fly rule applies. (Umpire discretion).
5. **To stop play-** 3rd & 4th Grade: An umpire will call time after play has **STOPPED. A player can't request time unless the runners have stopped running.** 5th -8th Grade: Must get the ball to the pitcher or the umpire calls time.
6. The ball shall be pitched underhand either windmill or modified underhand with a minimal arc.
7. **Pitching Feet Position:** 1) both feet start in contact with the rubber 2) back foot starts off the rubber 3) step back-back foot starts on or off the rubber and pitcher can step back when pitching.
8. **New Pitching Rule:** Both feet of the pitcher are allowed to disengage from the playing surface during their delivery when pushing off the pitcher's plate.
9. **There are no limitations on the number of innings or games that pitchers pitch.**
10. A pitcher must be removed from pitching after she has hit four (4) batters. She may not re-enter as a pitcher. The official may waive this rule if he feels the batters are not attempting to avoid being hit. (i.e.: batter is out of box or in strike zone)
11. A player pitched ball that hits a batter advances the batter to first base as long as the batter makes a reasonable attempt to avoid the pitch. (Umpire Discretion).
12. There will be no intentional walks allowed.
13. **4th Called BALL (All Grades)-** On the 4th called ball, the ball is considered live and base runners may advance at their own risk.
14. **3rd & 4th Grade:** No walks on balls. After four balls on a batter, the offensive teams' coach will come out and pitch to the batter. ***The batters strike count remains the same*** and the coach gets a maximum of three (3) pitches for the batter to put the ball in play. (For example: If the player has two strikes and swings and misses at the first pitch from the coach, the batter would be out).
 - The defensive pitcher can take a position behind or on either side of the coach pitcher and must be behind the pitching rubber.
 - The coach must throw under-hand and must pitch from the pitcher's plate.
 - The coach pitcher does not have to be one of the coaches; a parent or another person may pitch.

- A coach pitched ball that hits the batter is a strike (batter does not advance to 1st).
 - If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher the ball is “dead” and the pitch does not count.
 - There will be no stealing while the coach is pitching to his or her own team.
15. Pitching Conference Rule: On the 2nd charged conference with a pitcher in the same inning and on the 4th charged conference with the same pitcher in the game, the pitcher must be removed as a pitcher.
 16. Four warm up pitches will be allowed between innings. New pitchers will be allowed seven warm-up pitches.
 17. There is no stalling by a team in attempt to run out the clock. If the umpire feels a team is intentionally stalling, he will use his/her discretion to speed up the pace of the game.
 18. **SUBSTITUTIONS-** There shall be unlimited substitutions for defensive position. A pitcher removed from the pitching mound **MAY** return as a pitcher.

BETHEL RECREATION CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches, players, and spectators MUST follow all BSD rules and regulations including- NO use of alcohol, tobacco, smokeless and vapor/e-cigarettes, marijuana and **NO DRONES or animals including DOGS** on BSD property.

- Coaches/Parents will role model good sportsmanship and teach good sportsmanship and behaviors to the children.
- **Coaches, players, or spectators may not disrespectfully address or yell at an official, other coaches, players, parents or spectators or disrespectfully address, bait, or taunt an opponent.**
- Coaches, players, or spectators may not attempt to influence an official’s decision.
- Coaches, players or spectators may not use profane or inappropriate language or obscene gestures.
- The head coach is responsible for the conduct and behavior of players, parents and spectators from their team.
- **Coaches, players, spectators may not confront or argue with officials before, during or after a game.**
- At no time shall a coach, player or spectator make a threat of physical harm or use physical force towards an official, supervisor, staff, or other coaches or players.

If coaches or spectators have questions regarding particular calls, rules, or an umpire, or wish to give feedback please contact: During Games: **Field Supervisor** Before or after games: **BR Director**

PENALTY: Any coach, player or spectator who fails to comply with the above rules will be subject to disciplinary action described in the Bethel Recreation Code of Conduct. Supervisors and officials have the authority to remove individuals and call authorities.