



Diocese of Cleveland CYO

**SOFTBALL-FASTPITCH
RULES
2024**

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CYO inspires young people to know God, to love God, and to serve God through athletics.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules apply in this league with the exceptions contained herein. CYO game contest rules may not be altered by mutual consent of the coaches. Only the CYO Administration may issue authorized changes.

Items in a yellow banner indicate changes from the 2023 rule set.

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL TEAM

- A. Defined as an individual or group of children from one or more Member listed on the team roster that meet the eligibility rules and are approved by the Member Athletic Director, Member Administrator and CYO office.
- B. Neighborhood children must be approved by the CYO Administration BEFORE they begin to practice or be rostered on a team.
- C. A CYO Team refusing to continue playing a scheduled contest for any reason without the consent of the umpire or CYO representative may be subject to a suspension for one calendar year. This also applies to CYO Sanctioned Events.
- D. An official team will be a minimum number of players:
 - 1. 8th Grade Division: The official number of players per team is nine (9). A game may not be played with less than eight (8) players per team. Additional players may be added during the game and will occupy the ninth and any subsequent spot(s) in the batting order. Until the ninth player enters the game the ninth spot in the line-up will assume an out each time that spot would come to bat. The game can't end with this assumed out. The game must continue until another out occurs.
 - 2. 6th Grade Division: The official number of players per team is ten (10). The players will be placed with four (4) outfielders. A game may not be played with less than eight (8) players per team. Additional players may be added during the game and will occupy the ninth and tenth spot(s) in the batting order. Until the ninth and tenth player enters the game the ninth and tenth spot in the line-up will assume an out each time that spot would come to bat. The game can't end with this assumed out. The game must continue until another out occurs.
- E. A partial roster or combined roster cannot be entered into any tournament or sanctioned event.
- F. At any time, rosters cannot be split to form 2 teams.

SECTION 2 - UMPIRES

- A. Umpires that are certified and registered with the Diocese of Cleveland CYO will be assigned to each game.
- B. Umpires have the power to warn or disqualify from the competition anyone who commits acts which intend to influence their decisions.
- C. Umpires have the authority to call or suspend a game if conditions warrant.
- D. Should the umpire fail to appear five (5) minutes prior to the starting time of the game, both head coaches may arrange for persons to umpire the game and call the CYO Commissioner to report that no umpire showed up.
- E. Head coaches are required to attend the pre-game meeting with the plate umpire to verify that all their players are legally equipped, and that all players and equipment are in compliance with all rules.

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

- A. CYO will provide to each team the official game ball for use in regular season games.
 - 1. 8th Grade Division - A Federation approved 12" circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used.
 - 2. 6th Grade Division - An approved 11" circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used.
- B. The field dimensions for each division will be:
 - 1. 8th Division
 - a. The distance between the bases will be 60 feet. The distance from the back point of home plate to the center of second base shall be 84'10"1/4.
 - b. The pitching distance will be 40 feet, measured from the front of the pitching plate to the back point of home plate.
 - c. A 16-foot diameter pitchers circle will be used around the pitcher plate.
 - 2. 6th Grade Division

- a. The distance between the bases will be 60 feet. The distance from the back point of home plate to the center of second base shall be 84'10 1/4".
- b. The pitching distance will be 35 feet, measured from the front of the pitching plate to the back point of home plate.
- c. A 16-foot diameter pitchers circle will be used around the pitcher plate.
- C. Catchers must wear a facemask, chest protector, shin guards and a full catcher's helmet. Catcher's helmet must have the NOCSAE standard label. When a catcher is warming up another player the catcher must wear the appropriate catching gear: including facemasks, chest protector, shin guards and a full catcher's helmet.
- D. Helmets with facemasks are required for all batters, base runners, on-deck batters and Catchers. **Helmets must have the NOCSAE standard label.**
- E. Defensive players are permitted to wear face/head protection on the field. If a pitcher or any defensive player wears face/head protection, its outer covering shall have a non-glare surface.
- F. Metal spikes are prohibited.
- G. All bats must conform to NFHS regulations. Bats that are broken, dented, cracked or do not meet the bat specifications are illegal.
- H. All players must wear member issued uniforms.
- I. Numbers on the jersey are MANDATORY. A number shall be printed on the back of each jersey. The number on the back of the jersey shall be 6 inches in height.
- J. All players must have the CYO Emblem on their uniform either sewn or stenciled.
- K. Pitchers are limited in the color of long sleeves worn under the uniform. Pitcher may not wear yellow exposed undershirts.
- L. Chains, earrings, other jewelry, glitter, face paint or other inappropriate items may not be worn during the game.
- M. An American flag and or a commemorative/memorial patch not to exceed 2 by 3 inches and with the approval of the CYO may be worn on each of the uniform apparel provided neither the flag nor patch interferes with the visibility of the player's number.

SECTION 4 - PRE-CONTEST COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Coaches must be CYO Certified.
- B. CYO Credentials are to be worn and visible at all times.
- C. If a coach has lost or forgotten their credential, must inform the umpire or Site Director and show proof of certification with a photo ID and either the photo of the credential or the coach's name on the certification list
- D. Coaches are responsible for the supervision of their team before and after the game.
- E. At each contest and practice, coaches are to have in their possessions; an official team roster, a copy of each athlete's Pre-participation Form and Emergency Medical Authorization Form and a first aid kit.
- F. Bench personnel are limited to players listed on the eligibility roster, one student manager and three (3) non-players. Non-players 16 years of age or older must be CYO certified. Base coaches must be CYO certified coaches.
- G. Teams failing to appear with-in 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time of a contest with the required number of players shall forfeit the game.

SECTION 5 - PARTICIPATION

- A. Each player must be treated with dignity regardless of her ability.
- B. A CYO player may also play on a non-CYO Softball team in another league. CYO games take precedence and will not be rescheduled due to conflicts.
- C. If all players do not participate, it is an immediate forfeit called by the scorer and umpire.
- D. If a coach will not play a player because of missed practice, unsportsmanlike conduct, academics or injury, the coach must inform the umpire and scorer before the game begins.
- E. Each player must play a minimum of two (2) full innings in the field unless the game is shortened by the umpire.
- F. Late Arriving Players: Any player arriving late to the game will be added to the end of the line-up and must still play one defensive inning.

- G. Guest Player Rule: If a team has less than 10 athletes at a game, a guest player may be moved from the member's other CYO Fastpitch teams to fill the positions at the start of a game under the following restrictions:
1. The athlete meets the age/grade restrictions of the team they will assist.
 2. The guest player is reported by means of the button on the Coaches Information page of ccdocle.org/cyo before the game in which they will be used.
 3. The same individual may be moved as a guest player for no more than two (2) games during the season.
 4. The athlete complies with the number of game and time limits as outlined in Section 6.
 5. The guest player(s) must meet the minimum participation requirements outlined in the division specific sections.
 6. Guest player movements are to be reported on the scorecard before the competition begins. The guest player will be denoted on the lineup card with "GP" next to their name.
 7. Guest players should not play more innings than players on the original roster.
 8. Uniform Requirements
 - a. Guest players must wear the uniform of the team that they are playing on, not their rostered team uniform.
 - b. There are to be NO duplicated uniform numbers (teams should have at least one extra jersey to be borrowed by the guest player for that game).
 9. Guest players cannot be used for sanctioned events or CYO championship competitions.

SECTION 6 - GAME, TIME & RUN LIMITATIONS

- A. No team or player is permitted to play more than 20 games in a season.
- B. No team or player may play in more than 2 games a day and 4 games per week.
- C. Games on Sundays cannot begin until 1:00PM.
- D. Games cannot start after 8:00PM.
- E. Practice sessions must be completed by 9:00PM.
- F. CYO Games or Sanctioned Events cannot be held Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.
- G. All games shall be scored as regulation games, if after 4 innings (3-1/2 if the home team is winning) have been played, the game is called by the umpire because of darkness, rain or any other cause, which in their opinion makes future play hazardous.
- H. All divisions will play seven (7) innings or a 2 hour time limit. After the time limit expires, no new inning may start. A new inning shall be considered started after the third out of the previous inning is has been made.
- I. If there is a tie at the end of seven (7) innings, the following tie-breaker procedure will be used for all divisions:
 1. International Tie-Breaker Procedure - Both teams will get an official at bat and each will start the inning with the last batter from the last inning on second base with zero outs.
 - a. The time limit is no longer in effect.
 - b. The Tie- Breaker Rule will be used and continued until a winner is determined.
- J. The run differential is as follows:
 1. 8th Grade Division
 - a. If after the 5th inning (4-1/2 innings for the home team) and a team is ahead by ten (10) runs, the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met.
 - b. If the participation requirements are not met, those players that have not played must be substituted in the next inning.
 - c. The game will end when the participation requirements have been met and there is a ten (10) run differential.
 2. 6th Grade Division
 - a. If after the 4th inning (3-1/2 innings for the home team) and a team is ahead by ten (10) runs, the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met.
 - b. If the participation requirements are not met, those players that have not played must be substituted in the next inning.
 - c. The game will end when the participation requirements have been met and there is a ten (10) run differential.

K. Inning Run Limit Rule

1. 8th Grade Division

- The inning will end when a team has scored eight (8) runs.
- Continuous runs scored on a play will be counted.
- Unlimited scoring will be permitted by both teams in the last inning of the game.

2. 6th Grade Division

- The inning will end when a team has scored five (5) runs.
- Continuous runs scored on a play will be counted.
- Unlimited scoring will be permitted by both teams in the last inning of the game.

SECTION 7 - LIGHTNING & INCLEMENT WEATHER

- A. When thunder is heard or a lightning bolt is seen at a practice or competition, the teams must suspend play and take shelter immediately. Once play has been suspended, a period of at least 30 minutes after the last thunder heard or lightning flash is witnessed must be honored prior to resuming play/practice.
- B. Umpires or the CYO Administration assume authority for competitions when they arrive on the field. When the officials recognize inclement weather they are duty bound to suspend the game. Coaches and Member Athletic Directors are responsible for application of this policy at practices.
- C. Announcements related to game cancelations will be posted on the main page of the schedule website, telephone announcement lines, Twitter (@CYOSportsDOC) and media as needed.
- D. Contests that are suspended as a result of inclement weather and cannot be resumed within a reasonable time at the same site will be canceled, unless deemed necessary to reschedule by the CYO Administration.
- E. Teams are to report to the field at the scheduled time of the game, unless they are notified through the CYO Office of the field/game cancelation.

SECTION 8 - COMPETITION RULES

A. Substitutions

- 1. For all divisions, the continuous batting order rule is in effect. Unlimited substitutions are permitted on defense.
- 2. If a player is removed from the game for any reason, when her position in the line-up is up, the team will not be given an automatic out. The next batter in the order will be up.

- B. Courtesy Runner - When there are two (2) outs, and the catcher or pitcher is on base, the courtesy runner is the last recorded out. If a courtesy runner is needed for an injury, the courtesy runner is the last recorded out. This courtesy runner must be reported to the umpire. The runner is not noted in the scorebook and does not satisfy any participation requirements.

C. Pitcher Limitations

1. 8th Grade Division

- a. One (1) inning will be charged to a pitcher that pitches one (1) pitch in an inning.
- b. A pitcher may pitch a maximum number of five (5) innings in any game.
- c. Once five (5) innings are pitched in the game, she will be ineligible to pitch any remaining innings for that game. Innings pitched **DO NOT** have to be consecutive.
- d. Violation of these rules will cause a forfeit to be charged to the team in violation. If both are in violation, both shall forfeit.

2. 6th Grade Division

- a. One (1) inning will be charged to a pitcher that pitches one (1) pitch in an inning.
- b. A pitcher may pitch three (3) innings in any game.
- c. Once three (3) innings are pitched in the game she will be ineligible to pitch any remaining innings for that game. Innings pitched **DO NOT** have to be consecutive.
- d. Violation of these rules will cause a forfeit to be charged to the team in violation. If both are in violation, both shall forfeit.

D. Base Stealing

1. 8th Grade Division

- a. Leadoffs are NOT permitted.

- b. Stealing is permitted once the ball is released by the pitcher.
- 2. 6th Grade Division
 - a. Leadoffs are NOT permitted
 - b. Stealing is permitted once the ball is released by the pitcher.
- E. Pitching
 - 1. At least one foot must be in contact with the pitching plate when the pitcher begins motion.
 - 2. Once hands are separated the pitch must be delivered.
 - 3. The crow hop and leap are illegal.
 - 4. Delivery must be underhand.
 - 5. A pitch may not be delivered until all defensive players are positioned in fair territory (except the catcher).
 - 6. Pitcher will be allowed five (5) warm-up pitches.
- F. 6th Grade Division - The ball is considered dead when the ball is in control of the pitcher within the 16-foot pitching circle.
- G. A hit batter will be awarded first base, providing the batter has attempted to avoid being hit by the pitch. Pitchers must be removed from the game after they have hit three (3) batters. Once a pitcher has been removed, she may not return as a pitcher.
- H. Bunting is allowed in all divisions.
- I. Sliding is allowed in all divisions (no head first sliding). Diving back to a base head first is legal.
- J. At home plate, on a close play, the base runner cannot barrel into the catcher; she must slide or cannot initiate "malicious contact". See NFHS "Malicious Contact" rule.
- K. Dropped Third Strike
 - 1. For the all divisions, the batter is entitled to try to reach first-base before being tagged or thrown out, unless a runner already occupies first-base and there are less than two outs.
- L. A dead-ball strike will be called on the batter when, in the umpire's judgment, she is hit by the pitch and prevents it from entering the strike zone.
- M. The infield fly rule is in effect in all divisions whenever in the umpire's judgment, a fly ball hit in fair territory can be easily caught by an infielder. With less than two (2) outs and a runner on first and second, or first, second and third, the batter is automatically out and the runners can advance at their own risk.
- N. Phantom tags are not permitted. The first violation will be a warning; the second will result in an ejection.
- O. Conferences
 - 1. Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of the team's personnel to confer with base runners, the batter, the on-deck batter, or other offensive team personnel.
 - 2. Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conference during a seven-inning game, without penalty, to permit coaches or their non-playing representatives to confer with a defensive player/s.
 - a. In an extra inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference each inning while on defense without penalty.
 - b. After three charged conferences in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed as a pitcher for the duration of the game.

SECTION 9 - OFFICIAL SCORER

- A. Each team is required to have an official scorebook at each game. At the completion of the game it shall be the duty of each coach to have the umpire sign the scorebook.
- B. It is the responsibility of the winning team to submit the score and lineup cards to the Softball Commissioner. All scores and lineup cards are to be submitted with 24 hours of the scheduled contest.

SECTION 10 - CAUTION AND DISQUALIFICATION

- A. Teams are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that the game officials and CYO administration feel shows respect and dignity towards its opponent.
- B. A coach or player ejected from a game for any reason shall be suspended for the next scheduled game. The ejected person may not associate with the team during the duration of the suspension, this includes practices

and scrimmages. A player or coach ejected from the game must fulfill the requirements of Bylaw 9 prior to returning to practice or participation in any games.

- C. Any player, coach or other person who receives two (2) ejections during the course of the season will be suspended for the remainder of the season and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

(Updated February 2024)