

MOUNTAIN ELITE SPORTS

MOUNTAIN ELITE SPORTS 2024 FALL CLASSIC SERIES SOFTBALL RULE BOOK



FASTPITCH RULE BOOK V.1

Mountain Elite Sports Fastpitch Tournament Series Rule Book

Welcome to the Mountain Elite Sports Fastpitch Tournament Series! Our goal is to provide your team with the most enjoyable and competitive tournament experience possible. We appreciate your participation and are here to assist you with any questions or suggestions.

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Quick Reference Guide

Time Limits for Games:

- **8U Coach Pitch:** Games last 65 Minutes, drop dead time for both seeding and bracket rounds.
- **10U:** Games last 65 Minutes, drop dead time for both seeding and bracket rounds.
- **Completion of Innings:** All games are to finish the current inning unless specified.
- **Weather Adjustments:** The onsite director may alter game times due to adverse weather conditions.

Run Rules:

- A lead of 15 runs after 2 innings
- 12 runs after 3 innings
- 10 runs after 4 innings
- 8 runs after 5 innings

These will result in the conclusion of the game. These rules expedite the outcome in significantly uneven matchups, ensuring a fair and enjoyable experience for all participants.

Regulation Games and Weather Shortened Games Guidelines

Standard Game Length:

- 65 Minutes, drop dead time
- Typically, a game consists of 7 innings, except for the 8U coach pitch category where different rules may apply.

Handling Weather Interruptions:

- In instances where weather prevents the completion of a game, the outcome will be determined based on the score at the end of the last fully completed inning. For example, if the home team leads 5-4 at the end of the second inning but the visiting team advances to a 7-5 lead in the top of the third before the game is halted by weather, the score will revert to the 5-4 home team advantage from the last completed inning, and the home team will be declared the winner.
- If the home team is leading and it's their turn to bat when the game is stopped due to weather, they will be awarded the win immediately.
- If an inning cannot be completed to determine a winner or if the game is tied after the last completed inning, the victory will be awarded to the higher-seeded team.



Determining Placement in Weather Shortened Events

- For games shortened due to weather, the outcome will be determined based on the score at the end of the last completed inning. If the score is tied at that point, the result will be decided by a coin flip.

Age Classification and Age-Up Date Guidelines

10U Division

- January 1st through August 31st of 2015
- Any 2014 Birthdays
- Sep 1st through December 31st of 2013

8U Division

- Sept 1st - December 31st of 2015
- Any 2016 Birthdays
- January 1st through August 31st of 2017

Batting Lineup Guidelines

- **Full Roster Batting:** Teams have the option to include their entire roster in the batting lineup by designating additional players as "APs" (Additional Players). This allows for free defensive substitutions for all players listed in the batting lineup.
- **Maintaining Lineup Consistency:** Teams must begin and end the game with the same number of players in their batting lineup. For example, if a team starts the game with 12 players listed in the batting lineup, they must end the game with 12 players as well.
- **Handling Player Absences:** If a player must leave the game due to injury or any other reason, and cannot continue, their spot in the batting lineup will automatically record an out each time it comes up for the remainder of the game.

Courtesy Runner Rules

- **Eligibility for Courtesy Runners:** Courtesy runners are permitted exclusively for the pitcher and catcher to maintain the pace of play. The courtesy runner must be either an available substitute who is not currently in the game or the last batter who completed their at-bat prior to the catcher or pitcher reaching base.
- **Selecting a Courtesy Runner:** If the player due up to bat next is the catcher or pitcher, the courtesy runner should be the batter who completed their at-bat before the last batter. This ensures continuity and avoids conflicts in the batting order.
- **Notification Requirements:** Utilizing a substitute player as a courtesy runner does not require immediate notification to the umpire. However, if the substitute runner will also be entering the game in a defensive role in the next inning, then their use must be reported to the umpire.

Documentation Requirements: Roster, Waiver Forms, Team Insurance, and Birth Certificates

- **Submission of Documents:** Before the commencement of their first game, teams are required to submit their roster, a completed waiver form, and proof of team insurance.
- **Roster Finalization:** Once a team's roster is submitted, no additional players can be added for the duration of that tournament. Teams must also ensure that a copy of each player's birth certificate is readily available upon request.
- **Accessing Forms:** All necessary forms, including roster and waiver documents, can be downloaded from our official website.

Pickup Players and Tournament Classifications

- **Utilizing Pickup Players:** Teams are permitted to use pickup players to fill out their rosters for specific tournaments. This flexibility allows teams to maintain full lineups and competitive play throughout the tournament.
- Must notify tournament director by Friday 12:00PM and supply the necessary verification documents.



Section 1 – Pitching Guidelines

Procedures Prior to the Pitch:

- **Possession:** The pitcher must have the ball in her possession before starting the delivery.
- **Signal Taking:** While positioned on the pitching rubber with hands separated, the pitcher should take or appear to take a signal.
- **Footwork:** The pitcher's pivot foot may drag along the ground during the pitch, and lifting both feet off the ground is also permissible. A pitcher may step back with the non-pivot foot before, during, or after bringing her hands together, regardless of whether starting with both feet on the rubber or one foot on and one foot off.

Illegal Pitching Actions:

- **Arm Motions:** Rotating the arm twice during a pitch or making any arm rotation after delivering the pitch.
- **Pitching Motion:** Utilizing any motion other than underhand to deliver the pitch.
- **Pitch Completion:** Failing to release the ball after simulating a pitch.
- **Time Between Pitches:** Not delivering the next pitch within 20 seconds after receiving the ball.
- **Crow Hopping:** Re-planting the pivot foot and pushing off again after the initial push from the pitching rubber is prohibited.

Consequences of an Illegal Pitch:

- An illegal pitch results in a ball being called on the batter. Contrary to previous rules, runners will not automatically advance one base.

Specific Illegal Actions Include:

- **Defensive Positioning:** A defensive player being outside the playing lines during a pitch.
- **Catcher's Box:** The catcher standing outside of the catcher's box when the pitch is released.
- **Improper Throws:** The pitcher throwing to a base while one foot remains on the pitching rubber in a live ball situation, or the catcher throwing to an unoccupied base with less than three strikes on the batter.

Warm-Up Pitches:

- Between innings, pitchers are allowed 5 warm-up pitches or 1 minute, whichever expires first.

Intentional Walks:

- To intentionally walk a batter, the pitcher must deliver four pitches with the catcher remaining in the catcher's box until each pitch is released.

Section 2 – Visits & Coaching Guidelines (Offensive & Defensive)

Offensive Guidelines:

- **Timeouts:** Teams are permitted one offensive timeout per inning to discuss strategy or make adjustments.

Coaching Positions During Offensive Play:

- **Base Coaches:** During the team's offensive inning, a third base coach and a first base coach are allowed on the field. All other coaches must remain inside the dugout to avoid interference with play.

Defensive Guidelines:

- **Timeouts:** Teams are allowed up to one per inning and three defensive timeouts over the course of a standard seven-inning game. If a team uses more than one in a single inning and/or a fourth additional timeout, the current pitcher must be substituted out and cannot return to pitch for the remainder of the game.

Coaching During Defensive Play:

- **Pitch Calling:** One coach may position themselves on a bucket adjacent to the dugout for the purpose of calling pitches. This coach is required to minimize disruption to the game and must avoid interfering with play and officiating.

Section 3 – Batting Lineup, Flex, DP, & Courtesy Runners

Batting Lineup:

- Teams have the option to bat their entire roster by designating additional players as APs (Additional Players). This allows for free defensive substitutions for anyone listed in the batting lineup. The game must end with the same number of players in the lineup as it began. For example, if you start with 12 players, you must finish with 12 in the batting lineup. If a player must leave due to injury or other reasons, their spot will automatically record an out when it comes up in the lineup.
- Teams can start a game with a minimum of 8 players. If a ninth player is absent, an automatic out is recorded whenever the ninth spot in the lineup is due up until the player arrives.



Flex and Designated Player (DP):

- The DP bats for the Flex player, who typically only plays defense. The Flex player is listed at the bottom of the lineup. The DP can also play defense for any player without altering the batting order.
- If the Flex player is chosen to bat, they replace the DP in the lineup, reducing the lineup size by one. The displaced DP then becomes a substitute and may re-enter the game once, returning to their original lineup spot. The Flex can re-enter once, either to play defense only or to bat in the DP's lineup spot.

Courtesy Runner:

- Courtesy runners are permitted only for the pitcher and catcher. The runner used should be the last batter who completed their at-bat before the pitcher or catcher reached base, or an available substitute. If the last completed batter is the pitcher or catcher, the preceding batter may be used.
- When a substitute is used as a courtesy runner, it is not necessary to inform the umpire unless the substitute will enter the game defensively in the following inning. Should the wrong player be used as a courtesy runner, there will be no penalty; the correct runner will simply replace them and the game will continue.

Batters:

- Batters must use the on-deck circle located outside their team's dugout.
- Players may fake a bunt and then swing.
- A strike is only called if the batter makes a motion towards the ball with the bat or if the ball passes through the strike zone while the bat is positioned to bunt.

Runners:

- Runners are allowed to slide headfirst.
- Runners must attempt to avoid contact at home plate; failure to do so results in an out. If the umpire perceives any malicious intent in the contact, the runner will also be ejected.

Section 4 – Substitutions

- **Substitute Players:** Substitutes are players who are not initially listed in the batting lineup but are noted as substitutes below the main lineup. These players can enter the game to replace someone in the batting lineup, with the replaced player then becoming a substitute. It's essential to inform the umpire of any substitutions, who will then notify the opposing team's scorekeeper.
- **Integrity of the Batting Lineup:** The batting lineup must maintain the same number of players throughout the game. For instance, if you start with 10 players in the batting lineup, you must finish the game with 10 players. No additions or removals are permitted once the game has started.
- **Re-entry Rules:** Any player, including those who have been substituted out, is allowed to re-enter the game once. However, they must return to their original position in the batting lineup. This means a starting player who was substituted out and re-enters the game cannot be listed concurrently with the substitute who replaced them.
- **Role of Additional Players (AP):** When an AP enters the game solely for defensive purposes, this change does not need to be reported to the umpire since it does not alter the batting lineup. This allows for strategic defensive substitutions without affecting the offensive order.

Section 5 – Batting Out of Order

- **Appeal Process:** Only the defensive team may challenge a batting out of order situation. Appeals must be made before the next pitch, whether it is legal or illegal, and before the defensive players have left their positions.
- **Consequences of Batting Out of Order:**
 1. **During the Incorrect Batter's Turn:** If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter will assume the position with the same count as the incorrect batter. All runner advancements and scores during this at-bat remain valid.

2. **After the Incorrect Batter's Turn Completes:** If the incorrect batter completes their at-bat before the mistake is identified, the batter who should have batted is declared out. Any advancements or scores during the incorrect at-bat are nullified. The next player to bat will be the one following the player who was out of order. If the incorrect batter was supposed to bat next, the lineup skips them, moving to the subsequent batter.
3. **After a Pitch to Another Batter:** Once a pitch is delivered to another batter following the incorrect at-bat, all actions and outcomes of the incorrect at-bat are deemed legal and cannot be reversed.

Section 6 – Interference & Obstruction

- **Interference Definition:** Interference occurs when an offensive player impedes a defensive player's ability to make a play. This can include any action that prevents a fielder from catching or throwing the ball effectively.
- **Obstruction Definition:** Obstruction happens when a defensive player hinders an offensive player's progress as they attempt to advance around the bases. This typically involves a fielder blocking a runner's path without possession of the ball.
- **Umpire's Judgment:** Both interference and obstruction are subject to the umpire's judgment. Depending on the situation, the umpire may decide to award bases or call outs. It's important to note that these decisions are not subject to protest.

Scenarios Involving Batted Balls and Runners:

- If a runner is struck by a batted ball while in front of a fielder attempting to make a play, the runner will be called out, and the ball will be considered dead. This rule applies to protect the integrity of fielders' opportunities to make plays.
- Conversely, if a runner is hit by a batted ball but is located behind the fielder making the play, there will be no interference call, and the play continues with the ball remaining live.

Section 7 – Infield Fly and Dropped Third Strike Rules

Infield Fly Rule:

- The infield fly rule applies when there are fewer than two outs, and a force play is possible at three or more bases. If a fly ball is hit that, in the umpire's judgment, could have been caught with ordinary effort, the batter is automatically out. This prevents the defense from intentionally dropping a fly ball to turn an easy double or triple play. The runners may advance at their own risk but must be tagged out if they attempt to move.

Dropped Third Strike:

- A batter is allowed to attempt to reach first base on a dropped third strike under two conditions: if first base is unoccupied or if there are two outs in the inning. In these cases, all runners have the option to advance at their own risk.
- If there is a force play situation with two outs (for example, the bases are loaded) and the third strike is dropped, any defensive player may attempt a force out at any base to end the inning.

Section 8 – Tournament Seeding, Championship Games, & Tiebreakers

Seeding Criteria: Seeding for the tournament will be determined based on the following criteria, in order:

1. **Best Record:** Overall points accumulated.
2. **Coin Flip:** Used if all other criteria are equal.

Seeding Process:

- Seeding is conducted from the highest to the lowest rank.
- In the event of a tie during seeding games, it will count as half a win and half a loss.
- The higher-seeded team chooses to be home or away in seeded bracket play. In blind draw or double-elimination formats, this choice is available only in the final matchups between the winners' and losers' brackets, with all earlier games decided by a coin flip.
- Teams are not permitted to forfeit seeding games to manipulate their position in the brackets.

Tiebreaker Rule:

- In the event of a tie game, the outcome will be decided by a coin flip.



Section 9: Bat, Cleat, and Game Ball Specifications

Cleat Regulations:

- **Ages 8U and 10U:** Only rubber cleats are permitted to ensure safety and prevent damage to playing fields.

Bat Specifications:

- All bats used must not exceed a Batted Ball Speed (BBS) of 98 mph to ensure player safety and fairness in play.
- **Note:** USSSA Ghost Bats and USA/ASA Ghost Bats are approved for use in MES Tournaments.

Game Ball Specifications:

- All game balls must be optic yellow, featuring a .47 core and a maximum compression of 375 to standardize play and ensure consistency across games.
- **Ball Sizes:**
 - **8U and 10U Divisions:** Use an 11-inch softball.
 - **12U Division and Older:** Use a 12-inch softball.

Section 10: Pitching and Base Distances by Age

Pitching Distances:

- **8U Coach Pitch and 10U:** Pitching distance is set at 35 feet.
- **12U:** Pitching distance is increased to 40 feet.

Base Distances:

- **All Ages:** Base paths are consistently set at 60 feet across all age divisions.



Section 11: 8U Coach Pitch Rules

Game Structure:

- **Innings:** Games are scheduled for 6 innings, subject to time constraints.
- **Pitch Count:** Each batter is entitled to 6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the 6th pitch is fouled off, additional pitches will be given until the batter either hits the ball or strikes out.
- **Game Stoppage:** Play is halted when a defensive player stops the lead runner, or when the umpire calls time. The umpire will then determine the position of all runners. Runners beyond the halfway mark to the next base at the time of stoppage will advance; those not will return to the previous base.
- **Run Limit:** Each inning has an 8-run limit, except for innings starting with less than 5 minutes left on the game clock, which will have no run limit.
- **Overthrows:** Runners may advance on overthrows until the play is officially stopped.

Pitching and Hitting Rules:

- **Pitching Stance:** The coach pitching must keep at least one foot within the pitcher's circle while delivering the pitch.
- **Bunting:** Bunting is prohibited in 8U coach pitch games.
- **Intentional Walks:** No intentional walks are permitted.
- **Slap Hitting:** Slap hitting is not allowed.

Base Running Rules:

- **Lead Offs:** Runners cannot lead off or steal bases; they may only start running when the pitch crosses home plate.

Defensive Setup:

- **Fielders:** Teams are allowed to field 10 players on defense, including four outfielders.
- **Coaching:** Two defensive team coaches may position themselves beyond the outfielders for instructional purposes but must ensure they do not disrupt play.



Section 12: Protests and Ejections

Protest Procedures:

- **Rule Application Protests:** A \$200 fee, payable in cash to the tournament director on-site, is required to initiate a protest regarding an umpire's application of a rule. It is important to note that judgment calls made by umpires are not eligible for protest.
- **Roster and Age Eligibility Challenges:** There is no fee required to challenge a roster or a player's age eligibility. The outcomes are as follows:
 - If the challenge is valid and the player is found to be ineligible, the opposing team will forfeit the game.
 - If the challenge is invalid and the player is confirmed eligible, the challenging team will forfeit the game.

Ejection Policies:

- **Immediate Consequences:** Players, coaches, or spectators who are ejected will be removed from the current game and will also face a mandatory one-game suspension.
- **Severe Violations:** In cases of flagrant violations, additional suspensions may be imposed at the discretion of the on-site tournament director.

Section 13: Refund Policy

Event Credit for Unplayed Games:

- If a game day that was canceled cannot be rescheduled, we will issue a partial refund credit to each team for that specific day.

Game Completion:

- A game is considered officially played once any pitch is thrown. This policy is in place because umpires are compensated for the full game regardless of how many innings are completed.

Non-refundable Fees:

- All ticket sales and team gate fees are final and non-refundable.



Cancellation Policy:

- If a tournament is completely washed out before it begins, teams that have already paid their registration fees will receive a full refund.

Section 14: Closing Remarks

This rulebook provides a comprehensive overview of the regulations governing Mountain Elite Sports Tournaments. For any scenarios or rules not explicitly addressed within this document, the default guidelines will be those set forth by the National Governing Body of Softball. This ensures that our tournaments operate under the highest standards of play and integrity.

Decisions made by the on-site tournament director are final and binding.

Thank you for participating in Mountain Elite Tournaments!

