

City of Kannapolis Parks and Recreation

2025 YOUTH SOFTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS

7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

Article 1. Eligibility

- Section 1. The date of May 1, 2025, will be the age cutoff date for the Spring 2025 season. The players' age on that day will determine what age group they participate in.
- Section 2. A younger player may participate in an upper age division if they are within one year of the age cut-off date. They can only move up one division (EX: a 7-8 player who is 8 on May 1st of the current year can move up to 9-10). However, after one game in the upper age division, the player is ruled to be ineligible to participate in his or her respective age group for that season. Player may move back down to the lower age group for the following season if necessary.
- Section 3. A player cannot participate in more than one division in our baseball/softball league
- Section 4. We will approve each player's age by use of birth certificates at the start of each season. Each player must be on the team roster before they play their first game to be eligible to play.
- Section 5. A new player may be added to a team roster after the cutoff date with the approval of the athletic staff.

Article 2 Team Composition

- Section 1. Each league/association that plays is responsible for their participants and volunteers. They must follow at minimum the draft policy set forth.
- Section 2. It is the responsibility of the league coordinators to conduct drafts, registration, and for placing Players on the teams.

Article 3 Duties of the Coach

- Section 1. Must wear photo ID badge at all practices and games or be subject to dismissal from duties.
- Section 2. All head coaches must be at least 18 years of age.
- Section 3. The coach is responsible for exchanging lineups before each game with the other team and to meet with the umpires before the game starts.
- Section 4. It is the duty of the head coach to maintain proper conduct among his team and fans.

Article 4 Game and Weather Postponements

- Section 1. Kannapolis Rain-Out Hotline 704-920-4344 should be called if a practice or game is in question.
- Section 2. In case of inclement weather on practice days, the coach should contact the players on the team. A coach should use reasonable judgment during threatening weather and remove his team from the field if necessary.
- Section 3. For game day cancellations, it is the duty of the home field/association to cancel games when playing conditions are not adequate. The home field coordinator is responsible to contact the coordinators of the teams playing at their site and the officials booking agent. Each coordinator should then call their respective coaches who are responsible for contacting their players.

Article 5 **Jurisdiction of Rules**

Section 1. The Youth Softball Rules are under the jurisdiction of the Concord, Harrisburg and Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Athletic Staff. They have the authority to make amendments to the rules in order to obtain the program objectives.

Article 6 **Officials**

Section 1. After a game has begun, assigned league coordinators and league officials will be responsible for discontinuing the game for any reason.

Section 2. All officials should report ejections of a player or coach to the home site coordinator. Each site should then contact the league coordinator of the ejected party with information about the ejection who is in return responsible for the disciplinary action as outlined.

Section 3. In the event that only one official is present for a game, that official must start the game on time. The game cannot be protested when only one official is present.

Article 7 **Code of Conduct**

Section 1. Coaches should always keep in mind that they are setting examples in sportsmanship and fair play and should conduct themselves accordingly. Constant yelling and abusive behavior toward players on either team is strictly prohibited.

Section 2. Any coach not carrying out the duties and responsibilities and policies as established by the league will be subject to dismissal from the league.

Section 3. A coach will be suspended indefinitely for playing ineligible players.

Article 8 **Protest**

Section 1. No protest.

Article 9 **Practice Guidelines**

Section 1. Practice sessions are made and scheduled by the athletic staff.

Section 2. Coaches violating practice schedule will be subject to dismissal from coaching indefinitely. All practices and games must take place on approved playing facilities. No practices are to be held prior to 6:00 PM on school days.

Section 3. Players must attend practices to be eligible for games. Any player not attending practice and shows up for the game that week is subject to the coach's option to play or not. A coach must announce to the home plate umpire before the game which players are being held out for missing practices. The coach must also notify the coordinator of the situation prior to the game and state that the player did not attend practices during the week.

Article 10 **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Section 1. Players, coaches, and fans should conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. This includes before, during, or after a game. Players and coaches who are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct (throwing equipment, arguing, etc.) will be suspended for 7 days. A second ejection during the season will result in an indefinite suspension from all Athletic Leagues

Section 2. Any player, coach, or fan that is ejected from a game or facility for fighting, profanity, or threatening others will be suspended indefinitely from all facilities from all Athletic Leagues.

- Section 3. If a player, coach, fan, or official's actions become harmful and disruptive to the program, they face being suspended from their remaining games for that season.
- Section 4. A player or coach who pulls a team off the field for any reason will be suspended indefinitely. If the suspension occurs in the last game of the season, an indefinite suspension will occur.

Article 11 Playing Rules

North Carolina High School Federation Rules apply with the following local rule exceptions.

Section 1. Team Composition

7-8, 9-10

1. A team must field 7 players from its own roster to avoid a forfeit.
2. A team can play 10 players on defense (6 infielders and 4 outfielders).
3. An outfielder cannot freeze a play, acquire a timeout, or make the first play on a base runner.
4. The ball must be thrown to an infielder to make a play at a base or on a base runner.
5. Players arriving after the start of the game can be added to the bottom of the lineup

11-12, 13-15

1. A team must field 7 players from its own roster to avoid a forfeit.
2. A team can play 10 players on defense (6 infielders and 4 outfielders).
3. Players arriving after the start of the game can be added to the bottom of the lineup without penalty.

Section 2. Pickup Players 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. A team must have 7 of its own players before being allowed to pick up players.
2. There is a maximum of 3 players allowed to be picked up. Pickup players are required to play outfield only and must bat in the last 3 positions of the lineup.
3. If players are picked up a team is limited to playing with no more than 10 players.
4. Pickup players must be from the same age group as the teams AND be on a team in the league AND must be replaced by eligible team members if they arrive after the start of the game.
5. Players removed from the game because of sickness, leaving early, injury, etc. are skipped in the lineup with no penalty. First time the player bats after being removed from the lineup is not an out. Player can re-enter on their next at bat after being removed but if they do not return at that time then they are out for the remainder of the game. They are not charged with an out.

Section 3. Grace Period 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. There is a 10-minute grace period from the games scheduled start time for a team that does not have 7 eligible players. A team with less than 7 players after the grace period will forfeit the game. Grace period time begins from the scheduled game time.

Section 4. Length of Game 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. The length of the game is 6 innings or time limit is reached. See Section 8.
2. Once an inning is started it must be finished, provided the home team is behind when it is their turn to bat.
3. No new inning will be started with less than 10 minutes remaining in the time limit.
4. A new inning begins when the third out is made in the previous ½ inning.

Section 5. Regulation Game 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. It is a regulation game if 4 or more innings of playing time has been played and is called because of darkness, curfew, etc. If the game is called before 4 innings or 1 hour is complete then the game will be restarted if rescheduled.

Section 6. Tie Games 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Any game that is tied at the end of regulation will end in a tie.

Section 7. Run Lead 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. The run lead is in effect as follow: a 15-run lead after 3 or a 10 run lead after 4 providing the losing team has had equal number of bats.

Section 8. Time Limits

7-8, 9-10

1. The time limit shall be 1 hour and 15 minutes finish the inning for age groups 7-8 and 9-10 from the start of the first pitch of the game. No new inning will start within 10 minutes left in the time limit.

11-12, 13-15

1. The time limit shall be 1 hour and 30 minutes finish the inning from the start of the first pitch of the game. No new inning will start within 10 minutes left in the time limit.

Section 9. Curfew Times

7-8, 9-10, 11-12

1. Weekday curfew times for all practices and games are 9:30 pm.
2. Weekend curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.

13-15

1. Weekday curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.
2. Weekend curfew times for all practices and games are 10:00 pm.

Section 10. Participation Rule 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. The entire roster shall bat.
2. If more than 10 players are present for the game, no player shall sit on defense in consecutive innings unless they are injured or sick.
3. No player, unless sick or injured, should sit a second inning in a game until all the players on the roster have sat at least one inning.

Section 11. Base Paths & Pitching Distances

7-8, 9-10

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
2. Softball pitching distance is 35 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

11-12

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
2. Softball pitching distance is 40 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

13-15

1. Softball base path is 60 ft.
2. Softball pitching distance is 43 ft. with an 8-foot radius circle.

Section 12. Shoes 7-10, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Players are not allowed to wear metal cleats.

Section 13. Jewelry 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Jewelry is not allowed to be worn during games.
2. Jewelry is not allowed to be taped over.
 - a. (Penalty) When discovered, the player is asked to remove it. Failure to remove it will result in that player being removed from the game.

Section 14. Playing Equipment

Batter Helmets 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Batting helmets, with front cages, must be worn by all batters and base runners at all times.
2. Failure to wear a helmet results in player being removed from the game.

Catcher Gear 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Catchers must wear mask/helmet, shin/leg guards, throat guard, and chest protector during all practices and games.

Misc. Equipment 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. The option of a mouthpiece or faceguard is mandatory for all defensive players.
2. Faceguards/mask are mandatory for all pitchers and pitching positions.

Game Balls

7-8, 9-10 - Game balls (softball – 11 inch) are the responsibility of the home team on the schedule. They must be Little League or other National Organization approved (PONY, Federation, Dixie, USSSA, NFHS, etc.).

11-12, 13-15 - Game balls (softball – 12 inch) are the responsibility of the home team on the schedule. They must be Little League or other National Organization approved (PONY, Federation, Dixie, USSSA, NFHS, etc.).

Bats

7-8, 9-10 Small barrel bats with 2 ¼ barrel.

11-12, 13-15 High School Federation Rules apply to bats.

Section 15. Players & Coaches Positions

Defensive Players Position

In an effort to maximize players actively participating on the field, all age groups can utilize a 4 outfielder alignment of left field, left center field, right center field and right field.

7-8

1. Defensive player must play even with the pitcher or behind the pitcher on either side.
2. All players must play in the outfield, or at the catcher position, at least one full inning within the first three innings of every game.

9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. No defensive restrictions for this age group.

Offensive Field Coaches

7-8

1. Base coaches and coach pitcher are allowed on the playing field.
2. Base runners coach may only instruct the base runners.
3. Coach (Pitcher) is not allowed to instruct runners.
4. A coach may be positioned behind the catcher to assist with passed balls but they are not allowed to give instructions.

9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. National Federation Rules apply.

Defensive Field Coaches

7-8

1. A coach may be positioned on each foul line in the outfield and must remain in dead ball territory at all times in an area (coaching area) that is halfway from outfield fence to first and/or third base.
2. The outfield coach is confined to coaching the outfielders only. A coach in violation of the coaching box rules will be confined to the dugout (can be replaced by another coach).
3. At no time may a coach step onto the playing field except in the case of an injury.

9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. National Federation Rules apply.

Section 16. Batter/Run Limit

7-8, 9-10, 11-12

1. Each team may score a maximum of 5 runs in the first inning.
2. In the 2nd – 6th innings, the team leading may always score 5 runs, even though their lead could be greater than 5 runs.
3. The team behind when batting after the first inning may always be able to score as many runs as possible to even the score and then 5 additional runs in those innings as well.

13-15

1. In the 1st and 2nd innings, teams are allowed to score a maximum of 5 runs or score more than 5 runs to go ahead by no more than 5 runs if they are trailing.
2. In the 3rd – 6th innings, scoring is unlimited.

Section 17. On Deck Batters 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. On deck batters are allowed to go to the opposite circle to be behind batter.

Section 18. Speed Up Rules 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Speed up rules will be used for the catcher only.
2. The last batter that is not on base may run for the catcher at any time but it is not mandatory.

Section 19. Bunting

7-8

1. Batters are not permitted to bunt or soft swing at the ball. All hit balls in fair territory will be considered live balls.
2. If a batter does bunt, they will be ruled out and the ball is dead. Baserunners will return to the base they occupied before the pitch.

9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. National Federation Rules apply for bunting.

Section 20. Dropped Third Strike

7-8, 9-10 Does not apply to this age group.

11-12, 13-15 High School Federation Rules apply to dropped third strike

Section 21. Base Stealing/Overthrows

7-8

1. Base stealing is not allowed at any time. Batted balls, unless called foul by the umpire, are live and in play until the defense stops the progress of all runners and the umpire calls time. Ball remains dead until next batter.
2. Runner must stay in contact with the base until the batter has hit the ball.
3. If a runner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the umpire shall indicate the infraction immediately by removing the runner from the base. The ball/pitch becomes dead immediately and NO PITCH is declared.
4. No base runner shall be allowed to advance farther than 1 base on balls fielded in the infield. Balls hit to the outfield are live balls until the defensive team returns the ball to the infield dirt. When the ball is returned to the infield dirt the ball shall be called dead. Base runners that are not half way to the next base when the ball is considered dead should return to the previous base. Players may not advance on overthrows on the infield under ANY circumstances.

9-10

1. Runners may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. PENALTY: runner is removed from the base and called out. Ball becomes dead and no pitch is declared.
2. The first overthrow at a base on a batted ball will result in the batter and base runners being only able to advance one

extra base and they do so at their own risk. NOTE: Overthrow is considered any ball not caught by the defensive player at any base.

3. A runner who has reached third base safely can only advance home on a batted ball or walk (when forced to do so).

11-12, 13-15

1. High School Federation Rules apply

Section 22. Appeal Play

7-8, 9-10, 11-12

1. The appeal play is not in effect.
2. The umpire will call the infraction when play becomes dead.

13-15

1. High School Federation Rules are in effect for appeal plays.

Section 23. Infield Fly Rule

7-10, 9-10 There is no infield fly rule for this age division.

11-12, 13-15 High School Federation Infield Fly Rules apply.

Section 24. Head First Sliding 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. Head first sliding is not allowed at home plate. If there is going to be a play at the plate the runner must slide.
 - a. (Penalty) - Runner is out and ball remains live.
 - b. Dive backs to the bases (head first) are not considered head first sliding.

Section 25. Pitching Limits/Rules

7-8

1. The pitcher/coach must start with one foot anywhere within the 8-foot circle.
2. A total of 5 pitches can be thrown.
3. If a batter swings and misses 3 times, the batter is out.
4. The fifth pitch may be fouled or tipped indefinite number of times.
5. There are no bases on balls or hit by pitch advancements to first base.
6. Player (pitcher) must stand beside, even with, or behind the pitcher/coach until the ball is batted.
PENALTY: Batter is awarded first base and other runners advance only if forced to do so.
7. Softball coaches pitch underhand.
8. Any batted ball that hits a pitcher/coach is dead. The pitch will not count and the pitch will be done over.

9-10

1. A total of 4 innings max per game / 8 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws at least 4 innings or more in a game, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4th trip and every trip after the 4th, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

9-10 NO WALKS MODIFICATIONS

If an At Bat has not concluded after 4 pitches and all 4 pitches have been called balls or the count is 3-1, a coach from the batting team will take the mound.

- The player pitcher will remain on the mound to play defense in the position.
- The coach will have 2 pitches to finalize the at bat.
- The coach will throw the pitch underhanded from the pitching rubber.
- The coach can wind up to throw the pitch but does not have to.
- The coach will throw the ball at a comparable speed to an average pitcher of the division.

- There is no base stealing permitted on pitches thrown by the coach.
- A pitch thrown by a coach may NOT be bunted.
- A walk can NOT be the final result of the at bat.
- Neither pitch thrown by the coach will be called a ball or strike by the umpire.
- The batter will be called out on strikes if they do not put the ball into play by the second pitch.
- A foul ball on the second or subsequent pitch will extend the at bat until the ball is put into play, a swing and miss, or the batter watching the pitch go by.
- If a batted ball strikes the coach who threw the pitch, the ball is declared dead and the pitch will be re- played. Any base runners would return to the base they were on before the pitch.

If an At Bat stands at a 2-2 count after 4 pitches, the player pitcher will have an additional pitch before a coach would come into finish the at bat.

Any at bat that is concluded within 4 pitches would be scored as normal – a ball in play, a strikeout, or a hit by pitch, and the game would continue to the next batter with the player pitcher continuing on the mound.

11-12

1. A total of 5 innings max per game / 10 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws at least 4 innings or more in a game, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4th trip and every trip after the 4th, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

13-15

1. A total of 6 innings max per game / 12 innings max per week is in effect.
2. Once a pitcher throws 4 innings, that pitcher must have 2 calendar days' rest before being allowed to pitch in another game.
3. If a pitcher throws 3 or less innings in a game, that pitcher does not have to rest between days pitched.
4. A coach has 3 trips to the mound per game; on the 4th trip and every trip after the 4th, the pitcher must be removed from the game.

Section 26. Hit Batters 9-10, 11-12, 13-15

1. If the same pitcher hits 4 batters that pitcher must be immediately removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
2. The player may continue to play any other position.