

BURBANK PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
SPORTS OFFICE
1111 WEST OLIVE AVENUE
BURBANK, CALIFORNIA

PONYTAIL SOFTBALL RULES

The rules of USA Softball, shall be enforced in the Ponytail Softball League, unless amended below. Situations not specifically covered in these league rules will be left to the discretion of the Sports Office Staff.

I. **GENERAL RULES**

1. **Teams will be classified based upon grade as follows:**

- K – 1st T-Ball
- 1st – 2nd Coach Pitch
- 3rd – 4th Grade
- 5th – 6th Grade
- 7th – 8th Grade

2. **Pre-Game Plate Meeting:**

- At the start of the game, each team shall designate their Head Coach.
- The Head Coach shall meet with the umpires prior to the start of the game to discuss ground rules, official start time, any special rules that are pertinent to the game.
- Plate Umpire shall announce game time after the pre-game meeting.
- The coach who attended the plate meeting, will be the only individual to enter the playing field for the purpose of necessary time outs, rules interpretations by the Umpires or to attend an injured player.

3. **Regulation Game:**

- All League Games will be scheduled for 7 innings. Number of innings played may be limited by the following time limits:
- **3rd /4th and 5th /6th Grade-** 1 hour 30 minutes, no new inning can start after the 1 hour and 30 minute time limit.
- **7th /8th Grade-** 1 hour 30 minutes, no new inning can start after the 1 hour 30 minute time limit.
- If the home team is ahead when the time has expired, the game will be declared over.
- Game can end in a tie, and be recorded as ½ win and ½ loss.
- **Mercy Rule-** No new inning shall be started if one team is leading by 10 runs after 1 hour and 15 minutes (3rd /4th & 5th /6th grade) or 1 hour 15 minutes (7th /8th grade) from the starting time. After the completed inning, the score will be final. This will be the official score of the game.

4. **Ground Rules:**

- The umpires and/or park supervisor will explain all ground rules before game time. These will become the official ground rules for the game. Any situations not covered are left to the discretion of the plate umpire. It would be in the manager's best interest to ask pertinent questions at the plate meeting.
- Teams must be ready to start 5 minutes before game time.

I. **GENERAL RULES- Continued**

5. Forfeits:

- If a team has 7 players present at game time, they can start the game providing one is an eligible pitcher.
- A team not having at least 7 of its players ready to play at game time, will forfeit the game.
- All games will be played according to the schedule without change.
- Cases involving extreme circumstances may justify cancelling a game.

6. Dugouts:

- Home team will occupy the bench on the third base side of the field. Team at bat is responsible for chasing foul balls.
- Home team is listed on the right hand side of the schedule.
- Visitors will occupy the first base side.

7. Substitution:

- Teams must bat through their full lineup.
- Exception: Pinch runner may be used for an injured player only. The pinch runner must be the last out.
- There is no designated hitter and each player must play at least one inning defensively.
- In the event a batter cannot take their turn at bat due to injury, they will be ruled out on the first time at bat, and then removed from the batting order for the remainder of the game.
- All players in attendance will appear on the lineup card and bat in proper rotation. No change is permitted once the lineup card has been submitted.
- If a player arrives late, they will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Managers will submit lineups at least 10 minutes before game time.

8. Conferences:

- **Defensive-** There shall be only **3** charged defensive conferences between the manager and any of the defensive players in a 7 inning game. The 4th Defensive Conference will result in the removal of the pitcher for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may play any defensive position but cannot pitch again. Coming out for an injured player will not be considered a charged conference.
- **Offensive-** Only 1 offensive conference per ½ inning while the team is at bat. Coach may call time and talk to the batter and/or runners.

9. Pitching:

- Managers are responsible for reporting all pitching changes as they occur to the scorekeeper. Managers must ensure that the scorekeeper records the change. Failure to report or ensure recording of a change will result in the disqualification of that player for the remainder of the game.
- A pitcher will not be allowed more than 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
- A pitcher may move to another position and then return to the position of pitcher one time, providing they meet the pitching requirements.

10. Equipment:

- T-Ball/Coach Pitch - 10 inch Optic Yellow RIF
- 3rd/4th Grade-11 inch Optic Yellow RIF10, .47 COR
- 5th /6th & 7th /8th Grade-12 inch Optic Yellow Softball.47 COR
- Both teams will furnish one new ball for the game.
- If both balls are lost during the course of the game, the home team shall furnish the third suitable ball and the visiting team the fourth, etc.
- Home team shall have first choice of balls at the end of the game.
- **Bat Requirements:**
- Bats must be in conformance with Official USA Softball standards.
- For list of legal bats visit: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball>
- All bats must be equipped with a Safety Knob, Handle, Grip, Barrel, and Taper.
- The End Cap shall be permanently affixed to the bat to prevent alterations.
- Altered Bats will not be allowed in league play at any time.
- Bats shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges and rattles.
- No more than 34 inches in length.
- Bats manufactured prior to 2000 are at the sole discretion of the umpire.
- **Helmets- Shoes-Protective Gear:**
- All batters and runners must wear complete safety helmets (NOCSAE Certified). The wrap-around headgear is unacceptable.
- Participants must wear close-toed shoes while playing.
- The multi-purpose rubber-cleated shoe is acceptable. Steel cleats are prohibited except for the 7th /8th grade division.
- Managers and coaches must also wear appropriate shoes.
- Catchers must wear complete protective equipment including chest protector with protective flap, full one-piece helmet/mask with throat guard (hockey-style mask is acceptable); shin guards and use a proper glove/mitt. The complete safety helmet shall be required to be (NOCSAE Certified).

11. Field Dimensions:

Division	Bases	Pitching
3/4	60 Feet	32 Feet
5/6	60 Feet	36 Feet
7/8	60 Feet	40 Feet

12. Special Rules:

- **3rd/4th Grade Division Only:**
- There are no illegal pitches in 3rd/4th grade division.
- During each half of an inning, the team batting will bat until three outs are made or 8 batters, which comes first. The umpire should announce that the 8th batter is coming up. After 3 outs or 8 batters teams will switch.
- Runners starting at first or second base may advance one base only per pitch with liability to be put out on an attempted steal. If the runner steals more than one base per pitch, the ball is live and they can be put out. After play ceases, the runner will be returned to the correct base without being called out.
- There is no dropped third strike, the batter is out and cannot advance to first base. The ball remains live and can make a play on an advancing runner attempting to steal.
- Base on Balls- The ball is dead and the batter-runner can only advance to first

- base. Runners on base can only advance if forced.
- Runners starting at third base may not steal home or advance home but are liable to be put out if they come off the base.
 - A runner cannot score or steal a base on a return throw or catcher's error from the catcher to the pitcher. A runner may steal second or third base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. No delayed steals are allowed. Base running rules pertaining to a runner on third base remain in effect. A runner will not be awarded home on a steal to third base when the ball goes out of play. It will become a dead ball and advancement to home will not be awarded.
 - Runners can only score:
 - i. When forced home by a base on balls or hit batter.
 - ii. On an awarded base when the ball goes out of play, or obstruction. Home base will not be awarded during a steal situation.
 - iii. Any ball put in play by the batter.

13. Special Rules- All Divisions:

- Any player who takes her place in the batter's box without a batting helmet shall immediately be ruled out by the umpire.
- All baserunners must wear a batting helmet. Any player not doing so will be ruled out after one pitch has been delivered. If the player intentionally removes their helmet while on base or advancing, they shall be called out. Any runner who scores or who is put out is required to wear a batting helmet until reaching the bench/dugout while the ball is alive.
- The managers must inform the scorekeeper before the game begins of any players not being played due to discipline problems. The scorekeeper will note those on the official scorecard.
- If, in the judgement of the umpire, a baserunner attempts to steal home and the batter swings at the pitch, the baserunner will be called out and the pitch ruled no pitch. (Bunting in this situation is legal.)
- No team will be allowed to steal a base with a 10 or more run lead. If a team with a 10-run lead attempts a steal, the runner will be sent back with no out recorded if the runner was safe.
- If the base runner is thrown out, the out will stand.
- Runners leading off prior to the pitcher releasing the ball will be declared out.