

Payette County Recreation District

2020 Girls Fastpitch Softball Rules

The purpose of the U-9, U-11, U-14 fast-pitch league is to provide young women the opportunity to participate in this popular sport. It is played around the world, and is a PCRD program that promotes our goal to provide opportunities for healthy use of leisure time. PCRD is committed to offering youth programs designed to be *fun, positive, learning experiences* with an emphasis on *participation, social interaction, and physical development*.

Policies, Procedures, & Rules:

Payette County Recreation District organizes its youth fast-pitch leagues as U-9, U-11, and U-14 teams. The NFHS Rule Book for the current year will be used by PCRD leagues. Payette County Recreation District may, in some instances, modify rules that are deemed beneficial or necessary to enhance or improve our program.

1) REGISTRATION:

- No player will be allowed to participate until a completed registration form and liability waiver has been signed. PCRD registration fees must be paid as well. Payette County Recreation District does not provide medical insurance.

2) ELIGIBILITY:

- Only players registered with PCRD may participate in games or practices.
- Parents may request to have their child move up an age division if a waiver is signed and the move is approved by PCRD.
- Players will not be allowed to participate in a division lower than their appropriate age division. Parents who desire to have a child with physical or mental disabilities participate in a lower age division may request special consideration. PCRD will consider all requests on an individual basis and make a decision to allow special requests based on the mental and physical skill level of the participant. The safety of all participants will be taken into consideration as well.
- Participants attending school outside their school district may choose to play on a team in the town where they reside or the school district in which they attend.

3) TEAM FORMATION:

- The goal of PCRD is to make every attempt to ensure that teams are formed on the basis of *participation* and *parity*. Due to teams being formed in the communities in which they reside, it is not unusual for *team* skill levels to vary significantly. The head coach and *one* assistant will be allowed to have their children placed on their team.

4) UNIFORMS:

- PCRD solicits sponsors that provide team shirts for all teams. Players are allowed to keep these shirts after the season. Visors, if worn, may not be constructed of hard plastic.
- Each player is required to have their own softball glove.
- Shoes **must** be worn. Softball cleats are recommended but not required. Steel cleats are prohibited.
- **All** jewelry should be removed prior to participation in practice/games that is exposed and could cause injury to the player or other participants. Jewelry determined to be unsafe by the umpire or PCRD will be removed or the player will not be allowed to participate. Medical alert bracelets/necklaces are not considered to be jewelry and may be worn if taped to the body so that medical information is visible.

5) CONDUCT:

- Coaches, parents, and spectators are asked to emphasize the social and physical benefits of participation and not the score of the contest. Spectators and parents are invited guests and their support is encouraged as long as it remains positive. Coaches, spectators and parents shall not criticize officials, players or coaches of any team.
- Coaches are expected to be **ideal** role models for their players. Sportsmanship, fair play, honesty, and integrity should be displayed at all times. Please be an **example** to all who participate and attend.
- The use of profanity or abusive language by *anyone* in attendance at PCRDR programs is considered to be inappropriate and the offender(s) shall be subject to immediate ejection. The use of tobacco products, being under the influence of or use of alcohol/drugs during a contest on park or school property will serve as grounds for immediate ejection, suspension and/or dismissal from PCRDR programs.

6) FIELDS:

- Not pets or glass containers.
- Players and coaches are asked to be courteous and clear the field and dugouts as soon as possible so that the next game may start on time.
- NO soft toss against the infield or backstop fences at anytime. Whiffle ball soft toss may be conducted in the outfield.

7) GAME PROCEDURES:

- Game balls will be provided by PCRDR when games are held in Payette County.
- PCRDR will make every effort to provide umpires for all games within Payette County. If, for some reason, the umpire(s) do not show, we ask that coaches proceed with the game as scheduled.
- All team personnel should plan on arriving a minimum of 45 minutes prior to game time. Pre-game fielding practice is restricted to ground balls in foul territory and fly balls in the outfield so as to preserve the playing surface for all games played that day.
- Teams may start and finish a game with 8 players. Teams who cannot field the minimum of nine players may use players from the opposing team, or (if coaches and officials are notified) from any team in the same age division or lower on a PCRDR roster. Pickup players cannot play more than twice in a season for the same team and must play in the outfield and bat last in the batting order. If players from the shorthanded team arrive late, they will be added to the lineup immediately *and/or* substitute for pickup players or those being used from opposing teams as necessary. Please remember that participation is the main goal of our programs.
- Coaches who become aware of the possibility of forfeiting due to a shortage of players should make every effort to plan ahead and secure additional players as needed. If the need to reschedule a game occurs, PCRDR should be notified so that opposing teams may be informed and arrangements made.
- PCRDR personnel or game officials will make the determination as to whether to call a game due to weather or field conditions immediately prior to its beginning or while it is in progress.
- If officials observe lightning in close proximity, the game will be suspended for a minimum of 20 minutes. At that time, officials will determine whether or not to continue based on **safety first**. If lightning is still observable, the game will be suspended at that point and will be continued at a later date if possible.

- It is very difficult for PCRD to effectively cancel contests based on weather and/or field conditions prior to 3 pm. If it is obvious that field or weather conditions will create the need to cancel contests, coaches will be notified by 4 pm. MOST cancellations will be game time decisions.

8) PARENTS:

- Parents should make every attempt to set a *positive* example for the participants.
- Please remember that this is a recreation program. Sportsmanship, fair play, and fun are the emphasis of our programs. Focusing on the physical, mental, and social development of each of our participants far outweighs the outcome of the contest.
- PCRD appreciates the time and effort our officials put forth to contribute to our programs. Parents must remember that our officials are doing the best they can, as are the participants. PCRD is making every effort to educate and train our officials to ensure quality officiating. Please thank them for the time and effort they put forth to provide our programs with competent officials as opposed to criticizing them.

9) COACHES:

- Coaches should make every attempt to set a *positive, caring, and enthusiastic* example for the participants.
- Please show respect for the officials and teach your players to do so also. Coaches **MUST** learn to accept umpiring decisions and contact the PCRD Director if there is a problem they think needs to be resolved.
- **All decisions made by the officials are final.** Problems involving rule interpretations should be directed to the PCRD Director by the next work day.
- Please remind your parents that children must be picked up promptly after games and practices. Give PCRD a call if you have parents who are frequently late picking up their children.
- Please conduct a parents meeting to introduce yourself, assistants, team moms, etc. The parent meeting is a great time to give parents practice and game schedules and explain what you expect of the parents and their children. Please provide the names and contact information for yourself and assistants as well.
- If phone calls are necessary during the season for any reason, communicate with a parent if possible. This will help to eliminate any miscommunication that may occur.
- **PRACTICE:** Practices that are well organized and fun will allow your team to enjoy their preparation for competition. Program success can usually be measured by the level of satisfaction participants experience due to coaches who provide excellent practice plans.
 - Practice sites, dates, and times will be determined by the head coach. PCRD *suggests* a minimum of two practices per week prior to each team's first game of the season.
 - Once league play begins, practices are scheduled solely at the discretion of each head coach. There are locations available throughout the county. It is best to check with the recreation district or school administration if you are unsure where you may conduct practice. Never practice on a field that has been prepared for a game.
 - Do not turn off or move sprinkler pipes, and do not allow players to bring glass containers.
 - Practice scrimmages @ Mesa Park should be approved by PCRD.

Suggested practice agenda (minimums and maximums):

U9: Not more than three per week and not longer than 1 1/2 hours per practice.

U11: Not more than three per week and not longer than 2 hours per practice.

U14: Not more than three per week and not longer than 2 hours per practice.

- **Game Responsibilities:**

- Keep your players in the dugouts.
- Encourage your players to clean up their dugout after the game and promptly remove their personal belongings and gear.
- Do not allow spectators or parents in the dugout or on the field. Parents who are creating problems for the umpires or in other ways, are *your* responsibility.
- Please encourage your team to take part in a display of sportsmanship and respect for your opponent by shaking hands with the opposing team and thanking them for their participation.

- **Basic Skill Goals:** Skills to be stressed for all ages: follow directions; listen and work with teammates and coaches; be on time for practice and games; be dressed and ready to play.

- U-9:** Learn basic rules; learn names, locations, and responsibilities of the different positions; learn basic batting techniques, base running, and fielding.
- U11:** Improve rules knowledge and application; learn the techniques and mechanics of each position; improve throwing accuracy; develop bunting and improve batting techniques; discuss and demonstrate offensive and defensive strategies; introduction of pitching mechanics.
- U-14:** Develop a thorough understanding of the game and begin to specialize on certain positions; begin to demonstrate advance batting and fielding skills; practice advanced pitching mechanics.

10) PLAYING TIME:

- Each player in attendance must play a minimum of six consecutive defensive outs and bat once.
- All players in attendance must be placed in the batting order and can only be removed for illness, injury, or by player/parent choice. Players arriving late will be added to the lineup on their arrival.
- Players who do not meet these minimum requirements must start the next game in the field and/or be placed at the top of the batting order.
- If there is disciplinary action to be taken, the following procedures must be adhered to:
 - Notify the parents.
 - Notify PCRD.
 - Notify the opposing team and the umpire prior to the game.
 - Note the disciplinary action in the score book.
 - Games have a time limit and may be called early. To ensure your players are meeting the minimum playing requirements, place them in the field as soon as possible. Players who arrive late will be placed at the bottom of the order. Coaches should make every attempt to allow players who arrive late to meet the minimum playing time requirement, but will not be held to it.
 - Coaches who abuse the minimum playing time requirement will be reminded of their responsibility and PCRD policy. After this warning, coaches will be on notice and be in danger of being suspended/terminated for the remainder of the season and be subject to a review in following seasons.

11) EQUIPMENT (Payette County Teams):

- 3 bats
- 6 regulation balls
- 5 helmets
- Catchers equipment
- PCRD Softball Rules
- Scorebook
- 6 whiffle balls
- Please plan to turn in all equipment promptly at the end of the season.

12) NUMBER OF PLAYERS, PITCHING DISTANCES, BALL SIZE:

Division	# of players	Ball Size	Pitching Distance
U-9	10	11"	35'
U-11	10 (4 must be in OF)	11"	35'
U-14	9	12"	43'

14) PLAYING RULES

- A. **14 & Under:** No new inning will begin after one-hour and 30 minutes or 6 innings, whichever comes first. Drop-dead time will be 1 hour and 45 minutes and the game will end immediately to allow the next game to start on time. There will also be a 6-run limit per inning. Run rule will be 10 after four innings, and 7 runs after five innings.
- B. **11 & Under:** No new inning will begin after one-hour and 30 minutes or 6 innings, whichever comes first. Drop-dead time will be 1 hour and 45 minutes and the game will end immediately to allow the next game to start on time. There will also be a 6-run limit per inning. Run rule will be 10 after four innings, and 7 runs after five innings.
- **9 & Under:** No new inning will begin after one-hour and 20 minutes or four innings, whichever comes first. Drop-dead time will be 1 hour and 30 minutes and the game will end immediately to allow the next game to start on time. There will also be a 5-run limit per inning. Overthrows that remain in live ball territory will continue to be live until the ball is controlled by an infielder within or near the base paths. Runners will be stopped at the base they were going to at the time the infielder gained control of the ball.
 - Machine will be placed over the 35 foot pitching rubber.
 - Half-innings will end when a team reaches a maximum of 10 batters, 5 runs or 3 outs (coaches agree prior to contest).
 - Umpire will feed the machine and monitor the position of the pitcher. The pitcher must play behind and to either side of the pitching machine and may not move towards the batter or to play the ball until it is contacted. The umpire will declare a dead ball if any player enters the 3-foot radius circle around the pitching machine. Any fair batted ball that *strikes* the pitching machine or the extension cord will immediately become a dead ball and be counted as a single. Runners may advance only if forced. Safety is a must!!
 - Each batter is allowed one fair batted ball, three swinging strikes or six pitches, whichever comes first. After pitch number 6, the ball will be placed on the tee so the player can put the ball in play. No walks.

B. **All divisions:** Tie games result in a tie.

***Bats:** Must have the 2000, 2004 or USA stamp of approval to be legal for play.

Speed Up Rule:

- All teams in all divisions should be ready to play (either defensively or offensively) at a minimum of one minute from the end of any half-inning. This means the batter should be ready and, *most importantly*, that the defensive team is on the field and ready for play as soon as possible. Most delays occur because the defensive team's catcher not being equipped in a timely manner. Coaches should require the player who will catch during the next half-inning to wear shin guards at all times unless it is obvious she will definitely have to bat. Each team is required to courtesy run for the player who will be catching the next half-inning if there are two outs. The runner should be a player who will **not** be playing defense the next half-inning or the last player who made an out in that half-inning.

Stealing & Advancing on Wild Pitches, Passed Balls or Errant throws from the Catcher:

❖ **All divisions: Runners may leave their base when the ball is released by the pitcher or from the machine. A team whose runner leaves early MAY be warned (at the discretion of the umpire) or called out.**

- *U14-* The batter may become a runner on a dropped or missed third strike when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied, or anytime there are two outs. Stealing is allowed.
- *U11-* Batter/runner may not advance to 1st on a dropped 3rd strike.
- *U9* – Runners may advance on fair batted balls only.

Sportsmanship:

- All teams should refrain from making comments or “chatter” towards the opposing team’s players or personnel. This includes any comment such as “Hey, batter batter, swing!,” etc. All coaches should allow their team members to cheer for and encourage *their team members only*.
- Thanking the other team for their participation is greatly appreciated. NO handshakes, high fives, etc. during the postgame (social distancing is encouraged).

***Trips to the Mound:** A second defensive visit to the mound to the same pitcher, at any time during the game, requires removal of the pitcher from the mound. Teams are limited to 3 defensive conferences without a change of pitcher per game. Defensive conferences are not to exceed 30 seconds.