



LADYHAWKS 12U FASTPITCH
FALL 2026 LEAGUE GAME MANAGEMENT RULES

GAME MANAGEMENT

All leagues will play under NFHS rules that do not appear or have not been amended by this edition of the LadyHawks Softball Rules. Tempe Parks and Recreation reserves the right to change or introduce new rules for the improvement of the LadyHawks Softball Program.

PROOF OF AGE, REGISTRATION & ELIGIBILITY

1. Child must be registered at age as of September 1, 2026.
1. Registration must be on file in the Recreation office before the participant can practice or play. Teams may be forced to forfeit until all players are officially registered.
2. Birth Certificates must be surrendered within 24 hours upon request. Coaches are responsible for verifying that the players are eligible to play in the correct age division. Coaches will be sanctioned if players are out of age range. Exceptions may be allowed upon approval from league administrators.
3. Player eligibility issues will not be solved on the field – the game should continue.
4. A request to show verification of age will be required to be given to the Recreation Coordinator or representative within 48 hours of request.

PLAYING TIME/ELIGIBILITY

1. Each player has the expectation to play defensively at least half of the game.
2. Players must have appeared in 50% of the games to be eligible for the post season tournament. Coaches using ineligible player(s) may: lose dugout privileges, forfeit games, be eliminated from tournament play and/or banned from future league participation.

3. Tournament playing time may be based on the skill level of the player.
4. No roster additions after October 12, 2026.

UNIFORM

1. Shirt/Team Jersey
 - a. All players on a team should wear the LadyHawks (issued) team shirt, EXCEPTION: Teams may wear their own uniforms if they fall within the guidelines.
 - b. Players must wear team shirts tucked in.
 - c. Numbers must remain visible.
 - d. If a player does not have a team uniform the head coach must consult with the site supervisor and home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. The umpire will deem if the participant is properly dressed for game activity.
 - e. There may be identical jersey numbers.
2. Pants
 - a. Players must wear pants.
 - b. Sliding shorts and protective pads are strongly recommended for all players.
3. Jewelry
 - a. jewelry allowed unless deemed unsafe or distracting by the umpire
4. Shoes/Cleats
 - a. METAL CLEATS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON ANY TEMPE FIELDS.
 - b. Players wearing metal cleats will be asked to switch to rubber cleats or asked to sit out for the entire game.

Help keep our Tempe fields and facilities in good condition. Please clean up all trash from dugouts and stands after games and practices.

PRE-GAME

1. Line-up cards: Ten minutes before game time submit a line-up card to include first and last names, uniform number, and substitute players.
2. Warm-up will be kept to a minimum. The second game on schedule will not have time for infield/outfield pre-game warm up except for the pitcher. The pitcher will be allowed 5 pitches in the first inning of their appearance, and any inning after that, the pitcher will be held to a 3-pitch maximum.

FIELD/BALL DIMENSIONS

Field: Bases – 60' Pitching – 40'

Ball: 12" Ball

Faulty game dimensions will be corrected immediately upon realization

GAME TIME

1. Program days:
 - a. Monday/Wednesday- 6:00/7:30pm OR 7:30-9:00pm
 - b. Saturday- 8:00 am, 9:30am, 12:30am
2. Each game will be 6 innings or called by time (70 minutes).
3. Make-up games will only be scheduled if field space and staffing permits.

OFFICIAL TIME

1. The Site Supervisor or umpire will keep the official game time.

2. The 70-minute game timer will start after the umpire yells “Batter up” or “Play Ball” to the first batter.
3. The timer will be set for 70 minutes. At the 70-minute mark the current inning will be finished. The home team is always allowed to have the last bat, unless ahead at the conclusion of the visitors’ last bats. The beginning of the next inning takes place at the simultaneous completion of the last out of the previous inning.
4. Games should average 1.5 hours (90 minutes) each.

FORFEITS/MINIMUM PLAYERS NEEDED

1. Teams may play with 8 players without penalty only if an 8-player lineup is submitted to the site supervisor.
2. A game may start if one team has at least 7 players. The team with 7 players automatically, if they are not already, becomes the visiting team. For the game to continue the 8th player must arrive prior to 3 outs being achieved, OR 6 runs having been scored, OR in time to bat in the 8th place in the batting order. If the 8th player does not appear, the game is a forfeit, and the teams may continue play as part of the 2-inning scrimmage.
3. If both teams have fewer than 8 players, the game is a double forfeit, but teams can play a full game.
4. The 8th player and any subsequent players that show up to play can only be inserted at the bottom of the batting order – using the “every player present” batting order, IF the team has not already batted through their lineup once. Players may not be added to the bottom of the batting order if they show up after their team has already gone through their batting lineup once.
5. Forfeited games will go in the book as 6-0. Teams will still play a game, up to an hour long, and “borrow” defensive players to fill the field. The team with the full team will be credited with the victory.

SCORING

1. To start each game, the first time the visitors come to bat they will be allowed a maximum of 6 runs. All turns after that, including the first time the home team comes to bat, the team will be allowed to score as many as it takes to tie (the current score) plus six runs. After the sixth run scores (that is: allowing as many runs as it takes to tie plus six) the other team will come to bat regardless of the number of outs in the inning.
2. Teams are limited to 6 runs per inning after reaching a tie score or if ahead by any number of runs.
3. In the bottom of the last inning the home team only needs to score as many runs as needed to tie plus 1 run.

RUN RULE / RUN LIMITS

1. Teams ahead by 18 runs, after 3 complete innings OR 60 minutes minimum of play, will be declared the winner and all game activity will end.

TIED GAMES

1. Regular season games tied at the end of the 6 innings OR time expires (with the home team completing their last at bats), will be recorded as a tie.

2. Tied games during tournament games will be governed by international tie-breaker rule – LadyHawks’ modified: a runner is placed on second base, and regular full innings are played until the tie is broken, including home team getting their last bats.

BASE RUNNING / STEALING

1. Stealing is allowed on all bases.
2. Runners are entitled to advance when the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
3. Penalty for leaving contact with the base early: ball is dead and the base runner is out.
4. Pinch/courtesy runners may only be used for an injured player OR, for a catcher when they need to prepare for the next inning. The pinch/courtesy runner will be the player that made the last out.
5. Balls that roll past the cones in the outfield will be played as a ground rule double. The batter will be awarded 2 bases with any runners advancing 2 bases as well.
6. Balls that past the cones on a fly will be counted as a home run.
7. Drop third strike will be in effect in the 12U Fastpitch Division.
8. The infield fly rule will be in effect in the 12U Fastpitch Division.

BATTING

1. Any 12U team may decide batting “every player present” OR batting the “strong 9 players”. When batting “every player present”, unlimited defensive substitution is allowed except for the pitcher. The pitcher may only “re-enter” in the pitching position once. When batting the “strong 9 players”, the re-entry rule applies (NFHS).
2. Players arriving after the game starts must be added to the substitutes list if using the “strong 9 players” line up. The site supervisor must be notified before they come up to bat.
3. Using the “every player present line up,” when a player leaves the game for any reason other than injury, the position in the batting order is an automatic out, but only the first time. To emphasize, after going through the lineup once, the vacated position will be passed over with no further penalty.
4. Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. Even though LadyHawks provides an official scorekeeper, it is up to the defensive team to bring any possible “batting out of order” scenario to the attention of the umpire. If it is found that the team has batted out of order, the player is recorded as an out and removed from play for that at-bat. If the team committing the “batting out of order,” discovers the issue, they may replace the batter with the correct batter without penalty.
5. City issued non-ASA certified bats are allowed.

PITCHING

1. There shall be allowed only two charged conferences per pitcher-per game between the manager or any other team representative from the dugout. A third charged visit per pitcher shall result in the removal of the pitcher.
2. Pitchers removed from the game due to conferences may not return to the pitching position. If a pitcher is substituted between innings, she may return to the pitching position one time only. The pitcher may only “re-enter” in the pitching position once when substituted between innings.
3. Pitchers can use the NFHS pitching motion.
4. Pitching warm-up time between innings is 1 minute or 3 pitches for returning pitchers and 5 pitches for new pitchers.

CATCHERS

1. Catchers must wear all protective gear (chest protector, throat guard, mask and helmet) during the game, during any warmup or during any practice.
2. No player shall receive a throw in the crouch position without wearing full protective gear. Players will be asked to put full protective gear on first, and coaches will receive a warning on the first offense. If this continues after the first warning, the coaches may receive further punishment at the discretion of the league supervisor on-site and the umpire.
3. Adults may warm up the pitcher between innings while the catcher is getting ready.

STANDINGS

1. League standings will be kept.
2. Tournament seeding will be best -worst record. In the event of a tie, seeding will be based on a. winning percentage, b. head-to-head, c. head-to-head runs against, d. total runs against, e. coin toss.

POST SEASON TOURNAMENT

1. There will be a single elimination tournament for each division.
2. Tournament winners, 1st and 2nd will receive famous City Tempe LadyHawks' award t-shirts.
3. Under no circumstances should coaches collect money from team families for parties and/or awards.

COACHES NOTES

1. Coaches ejected from a game must meet with the recreation coordinator in charge of the program before being allowed to return and resume coaching duties.
2. Coaches must stay within an "arm's length" of their dug out or be subject to ejection. Any coach choosing to sit on a bucket or stand outside the confines of the dugout does so at their own risk.
3. Any coach that has any type of confrontation with umpires, spectators or league representative, that results in ejection from the playing area must meet with League Coordinator before being allowed to attend any consequent games.

GAME NOTES

1. There will be 1 minute between half innings.
2. Defensive team gatherings are not allowed - the time will come out of the team's warm-up minute.
3. Use a courtesy runner for the catcher. A courtesy runner is the player that has the last recorded out.
4. Try to have a coach warm-up the pitcher while the catcher gets ready.
5. The home plate umpire may control repeated offensive and/or defensive conferences by a coach to their players, if the umpire thinks time is purposely being wasted. The umpire will first issue a warning then disqualify the coach/manager. This rule is written to make sure no team tries to run out the game clock out unnecessarily.

UMPIRES

1. Any Umpire's decision, which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or ball, or whether a runner is safe, or out, is final. If there is a reasonable doubt about some decision conflicting with the rules, the head coach may ask that the correct ruling be made. The Umpire making the decision may ask another Umpire for information before making a final decision. The use of videotapes by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decisions is prohibited.
2. Issues or concerns about the performance of a Sports Official can be prompted by a coach, parent, or Tempe Recreation Services. All complaints about Tempe Sports Officials are taken seriously and will be reviewed by way of the following procedures.
 - a. Follow-Up by Tempe Community Services-Youth Sports
 - b. Potential Action
 - c. Input/Responsibility

PROTEST

1. Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of the umpire.
2. There will be no recourse or relief on issues involving the misinterpretation of a playing rule.
3. The leagues will operate with the understanding that players, coaches and umpires can and will make mistakes. In the case of the umpires, we will review the events and use the results to make changes or use them as a teachable moment for the umpires and staff.
4. The expectation of the coaches is that they may make an inquiry about a call. If the question is not resolved to their satisfaction, they should drop their concern, continue the game with no further disruption and call the league coordinator within 24 hours of game time.

A FINAL BUT IMPORTANT NOTE:

In the event of any rule question or cases not covered in the LadyHawks Softball Guide Handbook, the Recreation Coordinator shall have the authority to institute new rules or to change rules, to maintain the continuity of the "LadyHawks Fast Pitch Softball Program.

IF YOUR LIGHTS DO NOT COME ON AT A PRACTICE: Call Night security: 480-586-4229 and tell them that you are a LadyHawks team. Call Summer – (602) 897-0559 if you do not get a response from night security.

FIELD SPORTS HOTLINE: 480-350-5293

In the event of inclement weather, please check the Field Sports Hotline number. We update the recorded message starting at 3:00 p.m. and then in 30 minutes increment when harsh weather is approaching.

LadyHawks Fastpitch Softball Staff

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