

# Mercer County Girls Fastpitch League Softball Playing Rules



Revised and Updated March 2019

The **Mercer County Girls Fastpitch League (MCGFL)** will play under the USA Softball rules for Girls Fast Pitch Softball. USA Softball rules will be followed unless altered by the rules outlined below.

I. Player Eligibility:

A. Only girls living in Mercer County, Brookfield School district and approved outside areas can play in the Mercer County Girls Fastpitch League.

B. A player's eligibility is determined by her age as of December 31st of the prior year.

C. New players:

1. New players to the league are to play with the school district that they attend when rosters are due (before first game). This includes tuition students.

2. If a player's school district does not have a team in her age division, she is permitted to play for a **bordering** school district that has a team in her division. She cannot change bordering school districts from year to year. She can choose to remain with that bordering school district's team in the future even if her school district establishes a team. For example, a player living in Jamestown School District (which doesn't have a Mercer County team in her division) can choose to play with Reynolds School District or Greenville School District since Jamestown School District borders both Reynolds School District and Greenville School District. If she chooses Reynolds. She must stay with Reynolds in the future unless Jamestown establishes a team and then she can choose to stay with Reynolds or she may go to Jamestown and play. The player is limited to one move. She cannot choose to play with Greenville at any time.

3. If the bordering school districts do not have teams in that division or their teams are full, the player is permitted to go to the **next closest** school district to find a team and stay with that team. The rules stated in #2 above apply.

D. Existing players:

1. Existing players that live in a school district that previously has not had a team in their age division and has already played in a bordering school district, has the option of either staying in the bordering school district or playing in her school district if a team is formed in her age division. The player is limited to one move.

2. If entire family moves to another school district, she can still continue to play with the school district in which she started or she may choose to play with the new school district. The player is limited to one move. For example, a player has played in Mercer School District for 2 years and her family moves to Grove City. She may still play for Mercer unless she chooses to play for Grove City. The player is limited to one move.

3. If a player has already played in the league and then changes school districts as a tuition student she may choose to play in the school district in which she attends or with the team that she originally started with. The player is limited to one move.

4. 18U Addendum(3/2011): Girls in the 18U division may play on any team in the division and can play on another team during the regular season if the team is short on players. In the playoffs, a player can only play for and be listed on one team roster and must have played at least ½ of the games played by that team.

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5. Younger players may play up. If a player is going to play up, she must be listed on one roster for each age division for which she is playing. NOTE: One roster per team per age division.
  
6. There are no lateral moves of players within the same age division. For example, a school district that has two 10U teams cannot have a girl playing both 10U teams at any time. She can only play on the 10U team on which she is originally rostered.
  
7. Any game in which an ineligible player participates will be forfeited. Any further offenses will be addressed by the board.

II. Scheduling:

- A. The League schedule will be devised by the coaches in each division at the annual scheduling meetings.
  
- B. No games will be scheduled before the date set by the umpire in chief.
  
- C. All games Monday – Friday will start at 6:00 pm. This does not include double-headers, night games or weekend games.
  
- D. After the scheduling meeting, if a manager needs to change the date of a scheduled game due to inclement weather or field conditions, he/she must contact the opposing coach, league secretary, and the umpire immediately. The home team coach must then contact the opposing manager within 7 days to reschedule the game. The changes in the schedule must be entered on the league’s website immediately. If there is an issue with the inability to report a game result on the website, then the secretary of the league must be notified immediately.
  
- E. If any coach needs to reschedule a game for any other reason, such as not enough players, it is up to the discretion of the opposing team’s coach if he/she wants to agree. If he/she does not agree, it will be considered a loss for the team having to postpone the game. The league secretary must be contacted of the forfeit immediately. If the opposing coach agrees to the postponement of the game, it must be rescheduled within 7 days or it is a forfeit for the team that had to postpone. The change in the schedule must be entered on the league’s website immediately. If there is an issue with the inability to report a game result on the website, then the secretary of the league must be notified immediately.
  
- F. The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the tournament will be used only for make-up games. There will no regular season games initially scheduled for this week.

III. Rosters/Proof of Insurance:

- A. Each team must submit its USA official roster and proof of insurance by the first game of the season per age division to the league secretary. Players may not be added to the roster after the mid-point of the season (to be determined). If rosters and proof of insurance are not received, the game will be forfeited by the team that has not turned in their rosters. All games will be forfeited until rosters and proof of insurance have been turned in.
  
- B. Please do **NOT** wait until the last minute to submit this information in case there is something that needs be corrected.

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IV. Clearances:

A. Every community must have clearances for every coach on the field. The board will not be held responsible for any community that does not have clearances for all coaches.

V. Play of the Game:

A. Start of the game

1. All games must start promptly at the scheduled game time. Team warm-ups start 30 minutes prior to game start.
2. Home and visiting teams and game times are noted on schedules.

B. Game balls:

1. Game balls will be supplied by the league: 18U, 16U, 14U, & 12U will use 12 inch Yellow Optic Balls with red stitches; 10U will use 11 inch Yellow Optic Balls with red stitches ; and 8U will use 11 inch Yellow Soft Compression Balls.
2. Home teams must supply a new ball and a suitable back up for each game.

C. Pitching Distances:

1. 14U & 18U: 43 ft. from the back tip of home plate
2. 12U: 40 ft. from the back tip of home plate
3. 10U: 35 ft. from the back tip of home plate
4. 8U: Coach-pitch 35 ft. from the back tip of home plate.

D. Official Game:

1. 18U, 14U, 12U, and 10U: A game will consist of 7 innings, if time permits. A game is considered regulation when 5 innings are completed (4 innings if the home team is ahead).
2. 8U: A game will consist of 6 innings. A game will end or 90 minutes. At 90 minutes a new inning cannot start unless finish the full inning at 90 minutes.(minimum) with an inning defined as one time through the batting order for both teams.
3. Number of players will be no more than 9 players on defense for 14U and 18U. Ten players are permitted to play for 12U, 10U, and 8U. If 10 players are playing defense, there must be a RF, RC, LC, and a LF in the outfield.

E. Official Score and Outcome:

1. Games that are not considered regulation will resume at the exact point where the game was stopped. The Home scorebook must be signed and dated with the time of day by the umpire.

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F. Time Limits:

1. All games will be two hour drop dead reverting back to the last full inning to determine the winner. If home team ties or takes the lead as time expires, no completed full inning is required.
2. Ties can occur for the regular season. There will be no tie breakers in the regular season.

G. Forfeits:

1. A team is required to field 9 players at all times during the game whenever eligible players are available. A team may not field less than 8 players at any time during the game. With the exception of 10U and 8U divisions which can field 7 players and 5 players respectively. A five-minute grace period will be given to a team with less than the minimum number of players required at game time or falls below the minimum during the game will forfeit the game. An out will not be charged for a team having the required number of players.
2. Teams are encouraged to play a practice game if a forfeit condition should arise.

H. Mercy Rule (18U, 16U & 14U):

1. Games will be called after 5 innings (4 if the home team is leading), if one team is ahead by 17 runs. Games will be called after 6 innings (or 5 if the home team is leading), if one team is ahead by 9 runs.
2. Umpires and coaches must agree on the start time of the game before the first pitch is made; score keepers should note the start time in their scorebooks.

I. Run Limit:

1. For 18U, 16U & 14U there is an 8 run maximum per inning.
2. For 12U, 10U & 8U there is a 5 run maximum per inning, with no game ending mercy rule.

J. Batting Order:

1. Any team in any age division may use extra players (EP) offensively, up to the limit of its roster, provided it is made known prior to the start of the game and properly indicated in the batting lineup.
2. The (EPs) must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game and once the number of EPs has been determined, it cannot be altered after the start of the game.
3. The (EP) may play defense at any time without his/her status being affected. The EP may go in and out of the defensive lineup as often as needed as long as her position in the official batting order is not altered.
4. If a player cannot continue to play due to injury or illness, an out will not be taken for that player's time at bat. Players utilizing this rule will not be able to re-enter the game.

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K. Substitute Runner:

1. An injured runner (a player who is injured while running the bases) can be substituted with the player who made the last out or has not yet played.

L. Courtesy Runners:

1. Pitchers and catchers who have reached base can be replaced by a substitute. A player who made the last out or has not yet played.

M. Catchers:

1. Catchers must wear helmet, facemask, chest protector, shin protector, and throat protector.
2. 8U catchers are optional but must wear full catchers gear if behind plate.

N. Batters:

1. Batters must wear batting helmet with chinstrap and face mask. All bats must be USA or ASA certified 2000, 2004 or higher with stamp intact.

VI. 8U Specific Playing Rules:

- A. Games will be 6 full innings. At 90 minutes, the game will end after the current full inning is finished.
- B. 5 run limit per inning, with offensive coaches calling outs on the field. Runners called out must leave the base and return to the dugout. The half inning is also over after 3 outs.
- C. Every player must be in the batting lineup, no substitute batters. Every player must play a minimum of 3 defensive innings during 6 full inning games.
- D. Batters get 3 pitches from the coach, 3 soft tosses from the coach, and 1 off the tee, if needed. It is the coach's discretion of the type of pitch per player for a maximum of 7 swings.
- E. No bunting, only full swings.
- F. No stealing or leadoffs when on base. Base runners may advance only when the ball is hit.
- G. No infield fly rule.
- H. No paid Umpires for games and no scores will be recorded by MCGFL.

VII. 10U Specific Playing Rules:

- A. Runners starting at first or second base are entitled to advance or steal one base only per pitch. Runners starting at third base may not steal or advance home on a pitch. All base-runners are liable to be put out if they are off the base. However, if a ball is thrown in an attempt to pickoff a base runner, all base runners may advance without limitation at their own risk. This rule ONLY applies to runners attempting to steal or, advance a base as a result of

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a wild pitch, passed ball or dropped third strike. It DOES NOT apply to any situation where a batted ball is in play or an error(s) occur as a result of a batted ball.

- B. After all play ceases, if a runner safely occupies a base beyond the one the runner was entitled to advance or steal: The runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- C. Batters may not attempt to advance to first as a result of a dropped third strike. The Batter is declared out and the ball remains live.
- D. Awarded bases will apply to ALL runners who are entitled to the award.
- E. Runners can only score on:
  - 1. A batted ball
  - 2. Hit batter with bases full
  - 3. Awarded base
  - 4. Pick-off attempt where the ball is actually thrown.
- F. Pitchers cannot walk batters on balls. After the 4th ball, the batter's coach will soft toss. This coach must take a position in foul territory and the batter is entitled to a maximum of 3 pitches. The batter must remain in the Batter's Box. Bunting is NOT permitted on soft toss. Failure to bat the ball into fair territory by the third soft toss will result in the batter being declared out.
- G. Base-runners may not attempt to advance on any soft toss except, in the case of the ball being batted into play.
- H. Any batter "Hit by Pitch", rolling on the ground or in the air will take their base. However, the batter's coach has the discretion to let their batter continue to bat, if hit by ground ball pitch.
- I. No player will be permitted to show a bunt, pull back, and attempt to swing at a pitch. If a player does, then she is to be declared out.
- J. 10 players are permitted, but the 10th player must play a position in the outfield. The 10U division is meant to be an instructional league, therefore at no time are more than 6 players allowed to play in the infield. However, an outfielder can come into the infield to field a ball.
- K. No infield fly rule.

### VIII. Reporting Game Results:

- A. It is the responsibility of the winning coach to report the game score on the website or to the secretary within 48 hours. Failure to do so will result in a loss for both teams.
- B. If there is an issue with the inability to report a game result on the website, then the secretary of the league must be notified immediately.

### 1X. Protest Committee:

- A. For the **2019** season the protest committee will be Joe White, Stephanie Schneider and Jim Hart.

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- B. A protest must be delivered to the league president within 48 hours.
- C. If the protest being made is a clear conflict of interest with an existing committee member, an alternate board member will replace him/her for that instance.
- D. The decision of the Protest committee will be final.

X. YEAREND TOURNAMENTS (10U, 12U,14U, and 18U) :

- A. The host community is responsible for appointing a tournament Director(s) who will be responsible for running the tournament, setting up the brackets and times. The Director(s) have the right to change the tournament format at any time due to weather or any unforeseen circumstances.
- B. The Director(s) can submit additional tournament rules for their fields before the tournament start date.
- C. Tournament games will begin on Thursday night. All games are to be completed by Saturday with the Championship game(s) to be played on Sunday with the exception of weather delays. The best interest of the girls must be taken into consideration when scheduling games.
- D. Seeding
  - Double Elimination Tournament seeding will be used.
  - Winning percentage will determine the final standings. Teams tied for a position in the standings will have the ties broken as follows:
    - a. Most wins in head to head competition between the teams that are tied.
    - b. Total runs allowed in games between teams that are tied.
    - c. Total runs scored in games between teams that are tied.
    - d. Coin Toss
- E. Scheduled game time is the forfeit time. All teams must be at the field and be prepared to play at a minimum of 30 minutes before their scheduled game time.
- F. Home or Visitor Team Selection:
  - The highest seed will be the Home team in the winner's bracket.
  - In the Consolation bracket, a coin toss will determine the Home team for each game.
  - If teams play multiple times, they will alternate Home team each time.
- G. Game rules are the same except in the event of a tie. The USA Softball tie-breaker rule will apply.
- H. Players must dress for at least 50% of regular season games to be eligible to play in the season ending tournament with the exception of injury or an upward roster move.
- I. A player cannot play down a division (even if age eligible) unless they played over 75% of the lower division regular season games.
- J. The Director(s) must text or email the MCGFL Secretary game results and scores after each game.

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### K. 10U Specific Rules:

- A mercy rule will be in effect after 5 full innings are completed, the 5 run maximum rule per inning will supersede.
- The games will be 105 minutes long but finish the full inning.
- Championship game(s) will be 7 innings with no time limit but mercy rule. If the score is tied after 7 complete innings, the last scheduled batter in the inning will start on second base, per USA Softball tie breaker rules. This will continue until there is a winner.
- Two umpires will be used for the championship game(s).

### L. 12U Specific Rules:

- A mercy rule will be in effect when a team is ahead by 16+ runs after 4 full innings, or 11+ runs after 5 full innings, 6+ runs after 6 full innings, the game will end after the full inning is completed.
- Game will be 105 minutes but finish the Full inning. If a game reaches the 105 minute time limit and has not reached the 7th inning, the ump will notify each coach and the game will proceed until that full inning is played. IE: top of 5th inning, the 105 minute time limit is reached, the top of the inning is played, then the bottom of the inning is then played, if home team is not ahead. Or a game is in the bottom of the 5th inning and the time limit is reached, the rest of the inning is played and the winner is determined.
- Championship game(s) will be 7 innings with no time limit but mercy rule. If the score is tied after 7 complete innings, the last scheduled batter in the inning will start on second base, per USA Softball tie breaker rules. This will continue until there is a winner.
- Two umpires will be used for every tournament game.

### M. 14U, 16U & 18U Specific Rules:

- Games will be 7 innings or 2 hrs. (120 minute) time limit with finish the inning unless mercy rule proceeds. If the score is tied after 7 innings or 120 minutes the USA Softball tie breaker rule will go into effect.
- Semi-Finals and Championship games will be 7 innings with no time limit but mercy rule. If the score is tied, the last scheduled batter in the inning will start on second base, per USA Softball tie breaker rules. This will continue until there is a winner.