



HIGH POINT PONY LOCAL RULES

SOFTBALL – ALL AGE DIVISIONS

Play in the 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U Softball Divisions will be governed by the Official Pony Rule Book, except for the Division specific Local Rules detailed below which supersede Pony Rules. Any agreement changing Local or Pony Rules will not be allowed. High Point Pony reserves the right to review and change these local rules as deemed necessary.

Coach & Team Expectations

1. All coaches and adult volunteers must have an approved background check on file with the league. It is the head coach's responsibility to ensure coaches and volunteers have their approved background check on file before allowing them to assist with the players. Background checks are good for the year in which approved.
2. Only coaches with a completed volunteer and background check form on file with HP PONY can be on the field. If a noncertified Coach is used, the team's Manager will be suspended for one game. A 2nd offense will result in suspension for the remainder of the season.
3. Coaches are to remain outside of the field of play. They must remain on the concrete or outside the fence unless they are coaching on the bases or pitching.
4. Any player, coach, or fan that is ejected from a game will receive an automatic 1 game suspension.
5. The HOME team will occupy the 3rd base dugout for all games and is the official scorebook keeper for the game.
6. The Home Team is responsible for turning off the field lights.
7. Only head coaches should communicate with the umpires. If an assistant coach has a question or concern, he/she should consult the head coach who will then consult with the umpires. The head coach should call time, then ask to approach the umpire from the baseline.
8. Coaches should not attempt to coach or communicate instructions to players of the opposing team.
9. There should be no "gentlemen's agreement" between coaches in an effort to modify rules during the game – doing so only causes confusion for the umpires.

Equipment/Field

1. Balls for 8U and 10U must be 11" COR .44 or .47, 375 or 425 Compression.
2. Balls for 12U or 14U must be 12" COR .44 or .47, 375 or 425 Compression.
3. Pitcher's plate distance for 8U and 10U is 35 feet. Plate distance for 12U is 40 feet. Plate distance for 14U is 43 feet.
4. Base length is 60 feet for all 4 age groups (8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U).
5. Catchers must wear proper equipment which includes a mask with approved head gear, throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards.
6. Fielder's masks are required to be worn by ALL infielders and outfielders. Batter's masks are required on all helmets.



HIGH POINT PONY LOCAL RULES SOFTBALL – ALL AGE DIVISIONS

7. Player pitcher for 8U must wear a face mask.
8. 8U may have 6 infielders, including the catcher and a maximum of 6 outfielders. 10U, 12U, and 14U may have 4 outfielders.

Pitching:

1. There are no maximum innings pitched for 8U. For 10U, 12U, and 14U, there is a 2 inning maximum. 1 pitch counts and 1 inning.
2. There is a maximum of 5 warm up pitches for player pitchers. There is a maximum of 2 pitches for coach pitchers.
3. There are no illegal pitches called in 8U. In 10U, there will be one warning given per pitcher per game and then each illegal pitch will count as a ball (or the best outcome for the batter as determined by the offensive head coach). For 12U and 14U, each illegal pitch will automatically count as a ball (or the best outcome for the batter as determined by the offensive head coach).

Batting & Game Play

1. All players will bat in continuous batting order.
2. For 8U, teams must have a minimum of 8 players to start a game. If a team does not have 9 players, they must take an out for the 9th batter in the batting order. No guest players are allowed.
3. For 10U, 12U, and 14U, teams must have a minimum of 8 players to start a game. If a team does not have 9 players, they must take an out for the 9th batter in the batting order.
4. Any player arriving to the game after the 3rd inning ends will not be able to enter the game. Otherwise, the late arriving player will be the last recorded batter on the lineup and bat in such order.
5. If a 10U, 12U, or 14U team anticipates being short on players, they may have guest players from their rec league who are players in a lower division. Players playing up are required to play with the same rules as the division in which the game is held.
6. For 8U, teams may use a courtesy runner for the catcher. Last out must be the base runner. Courtesy runner can be subbed in at any time.
7. For 10U, 12U, and 14U, a courtesy runner can be used for the pitcher and/or catcher. Last out must be the base runner. Courtesy runner can be subbed in at any time.
8. 8U and 10U teams are NOT able to advance on a dropped 3rd strike.
9. 12U and 14U teams ARE able to advance on a dropped 3rd strike.
10. The infield fly rule only applies to 10U, 12U, and 14U.
11. The batter must try to avoid contact at home but is NOT required to slide.
12. On overthrows, 8U may advance 1 base only. 10U may advance 1 base EACH overthrow. 12U and 14U may advance unlimited as able.



HIGH POINT PONY LOCAL RULES SOFTBALL – ALL AGE DIVISIONS

13. There is no bunting allowed in 8U. 10U teams are allowed to bunt when the player is pitching. 12U and 14U can bunt any time.
14. Defensive play is stopped in 8U when the umpire determines the ball has been thrown to the pitcher in the pitcher's circle. Defensive play is stopped in all other age groups when the umpire determines the ball is possessed by the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.
15. On offense in 8U, if the runner is more than halfway to the next base when the play is stopped, they may advance to the next base. This is up to the umpire's discretion.
16. On offense in 10U, 12U, and 14U, once play has stopped, the runners must immediately either return to the previous base or commit to the next base -- "Look Back Rule" - if the pitcher makes a motion towards a runner, the runner may change directions. PONY Rule 9, Section 11 (1)
 - a. *Once the pitcher possesses the ball in the pitcher's circle, base runners must immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. Failure to immediately advance or return to a base will result in the runner being called out; changing direction after starting advance/return will result in an out unless the pitcher makes a "Softball" motion with the ball (ex. Throw, fake throw, at runner)*

Game Length:

1. Games are 5 innings in length for 8U. Games for older groups are 4 innings.
2. For 8U, no new inning will start after 1 hour. Finish the inning started. If it is an inning capped at 5 runs, the final inning will be capped. If the inning started is the unlimited inning, the inning will have unlimited runs.
3. For 10U, 12U, and 14U, no new inning will start after 1 hour & 15 mins. Finish the inning started. If it is an inning capped at 5 runs, the final inning will be capped. If the inning started is the unlimited inning, the inning will have unlimited runs.
4. For all age groups, there is a 5 run limit per inning, except the last inning, which has unlimited runs.
5. For all age groups, there is a 12 run differential after 3 innings and 10 run differential after 4 innings.
6. No more than 2 minutes shall pass between the final out being called of the previous inning until the first pitch of the next inning. Umpires are responsible for time limit.

Misc Rules

1. Swinging bats outside of the fenced area is NOT allowed. Throwing balls for warmups should be done in areas away from spectators.
2. All players must remain in the dugout area during the game. Only players and certified coaches are permitted in the dugout area and playing field.
3. Coach's buckets must remain on the concrete walkway in front of the dugout and may not be out in the dirt.
4. No food in the dugout; drinks only. PLEASE CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR TEAM.



HIGH POINT PONY LOCAL RULES

SOFTBALL – ALL AGE DIVISIONS

8U Specific Rules

1. Coach pitcher will throw up to 4 pitches or 3 strikes to each batter. The batter is out if the ball is not put in play after the 4th pitch or upon the 3rd strike, unless the batter hits the 4th ball foul. If they hit the 4th ball foul, the batter will get additional pitches for foul balls, until she does not swing, misses the pitch, or puts the ball into play.
2. Coach must begin with 1 foot on the pitcher's rubber. Coach must release the ball with both feet remaining within the 8-foot radius pitching circle.
3. Coach must avoid interference at all times. A batted ball that hits the coach will be considered a dead ball - batter will return to hit again. If there is intentional interference, the batter will be ruled out.
4. Player pitcher must have 1 foot within the pitcher's circle (and behind the 35 ft pitching rubber) until the ball is hit.
5. All infielders must stay within 10 feet of the baseline until the ball is hit.
6. All players not in the infield will need to play in the grass. They may not move into the infield until the ball is put in play by a batter.
7. No leads or stealing.
8. Base Runners can continue to advance on hits until the ball is in the pitching circle.
9. There are a maximum of 2 outfield defensive coaches. One may stand outside of the first baseline by right field. The other may stand outside of the third baseline by left field. The umpire shall give one coach warning per game.

10U Specific Rules

1. Coach pitcher will throw up to 4 pitches or 3 strikes to each batter. The batter is out if the ball is not put in play after the 4th pitch or upon the 3rd strike, unless the batter hits the 4th ball foul. If they hit the 4th ball foul, the batter will get additional pitches for foul balls, until she does not swing, misses the pitch, or puts the ball into play.
2. Player pitcher will throw to each batter. A batter will be awarded 1st Base upon 4 pitches from the player pitcher called a ball by the umpire. Upon 4 batters awarded 1st base (by walking or being hit by a pitch), the coach from the offensive team will enter the game and pitch the remainder of the inning. When the offensive coach enters the game, they only take 2 warm up pitches per inning and pitch the remainder of the inning.
3. Batters hit by a pitch thrown by a player are awarded first base. It does count towards a pitcher's 4 walks.
4. Pitchers are limited to **2 innings maximum per game**. One pitch counts as an inning.
5. Leads or stealing is allowed upon the pitcher's release of the ball. Runner may lead off when the coach is pitching but are **NOT** permitted to steal while the coach is pitching. The maximum lead off distance is approximately 6 feet when the coach is pitcher is in the game.



HIGH POINT PONY LOCAL RULES SOFTBALL – ALL AGE DIVISIONS

6. A player substituted into the player pitcher position when a coach pitcher is pitching will still count towards their 2 maximum inning availability.

Illegal Pitches

Pitcher may use any windup desired, providing:

- She does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- She does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in the pitching position, she removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing, and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- She does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- She does not make two revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop her arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.
- Pivot foot cannot be moved forward off rubber prior to forward step.
- Both feet can be off rubber simultaneously and pitcher wind up can be finished after pivot foot landing, but pitcher cannot replant.
- She does not continue the wind up after taking the forward step, which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- Once the pitcher possesses the ball in the pitcher's circle, base runners must immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. Failure to immediately advance or return to a base will result in the runner being called out; changing direction after starting advance/return will result in an out unless the pitcher makes a "Softball" motion with the ball (ex. Throw, fake throw, at runner)