



## 2023 SPRING 12U NATIONAL DIVISION

### GAME MANAGEMENT RULES

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 Youth Sports reserves the right to change or introduce new rules for the improvement of the LadyHawks Softball Program.

#### **PROOF OF AGE, REGISTRATION & ELIGIBILITY**

1. Registration must be on file in the Recreation office.  
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.
2. Registration: Must be on file and signed by a guardian before the participant can practice or play.
3. **Child must be registered at age as of January 1, 2023.**
4. Player eligibility issues will not be solved on the field – the game should continue.
5. Player eligibility issues will be solved 24-48 hours after a concern has been expressed.
6. No roster additions after April 8, 2023

#### **PLAYING TIME**

Each player has the expectation to play defensively at least ½ the game.

**Players must have appeared in 50% of the games in order 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.

## **UNIFORM**

### A. Shirt/Team Jersey

1. All players on a team shall wear the LadyHawks (issued) team shirt.
2. EXCEPTION: club teams may wear their own uniforms if they fall within the guidelines of pants, sliding shorts, and shin guard.
3. Players *must* wear the team shirts tucked in.
4. Numbers must remain visible.
5. 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.
6. There may be identical jersey numbers.

### B. Headwear Socks

Handkerchiefs do not qualify and cannot be worn around the head, neck, arm, or leg. Bandana's of any color are NOT allowed. There cannot be any loose or hanging "flag- like" material hanging or flapping from any part of the uniform, socks, shoes.

### C. Pants/ Cleats     **METAL CLEATS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON ANY TEMPE FIELDS**

1. Players must wear pants OR have a combination of slider shorts & slider shin pad.
2. Pants must be long if player does not have slider shorts or slider shin pad and can be mixed in style and color. Shorts may only be worn when accompanied by slider shorts & shin pad.
3. Sliding shorts and protective pads are strongly *recommended* for all players.
4. Only rubber-soled cleats are allowed in the 12U league. **Absolutely no metal cleats.** Players wearing metal cleats will be asked to switch to rubber cleats or asked to sit out for the entire game.

### D. Undershirts

1. Player's undershirts, if worn, may be mixed in style and color

### E. Jewelry

1. No jewelry may be worn. (Newly pierced ears may be covered with tape only if it is stud earring, no larger than .25 carats.)
2. All other jewelry (chains, charms, bracelets, bandanas etc.) must be removed and may not be worn during the game.
3. No gauged earrings will be allowed.

### F. Shoes

No Metal Cleats are allowed.

HELP KEEP OUR FIELDS IN GOOD CONDITION. NO SUNFLOWER SEEDS, PASTACHIOS OR ANY "SHELLED" SNACKS ALLOWED. THEY WILL RUIN AND POLLUTE OUR TOPSOIL

## **PRE-GAME**

1. **All players must be registered with the City of Tempe before they can *practice or play.***
2. Teams may be forced to forfeit until all players are officially registered.
3. Temporary tattoos or ink pen markings are not permitted.
4. Line-up cards: Ten minutes before game time submit a line-up card to include **FIRST AND LAST names, UNIFORM NUMBER, and substitute players.**
5. Warm-up WILL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM.

The second game of the evening 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 – NFHS rule.)

## **GAME TIME**

- MON & WED 6PM or 7PM and SAT 8AM, 9:30AM, AND/OR 11AM
- Each game will be 6 innings or called by time.
- A game is considered complete at the completion of 3 innings unless time has expired.
- SEE FORFEIT/MINIMUM PLAYER DETAIL if a complete team is not ready at game time.
- Make-up games will ONLY be scheduled if field space and staffing permits.

## **OFFICIAL TIME**

1. The *scorekeeper* will keep the official game time.
2. The 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 buzzer goes off) the current inning will be finished. The home team is always allowed to have the last bat, unless they are ahead at the conclusion of the visitors last bats. (\*The next inning begins 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 must have 8 players to start and continue a game with the following exception.
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 8<sup>th</sup> player must arrive prior to 3 outs being achieved, OR 6 runs having been scored, OR in time to bat in the 8<sup>th</sup> place in the batting order. If the 8<sup>th</sup> player does not appear, the game is a forfeit and the teams may continue play as part of the 2-inning scrimmage (refer to point #5).
3. If both teams have fewer than eight players, the game is a double forfeit.
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.
5. Forfeited games will go in the book as 6-0. Teams will play a an hour long “game, **with umpires**”.

## **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(6) RUNS. There is no “continuation rule” for runners coming home after the four-max run is reached. After the fourth run scores (that is: allowing as many runs as it takes to tie plus 6), 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.

## **TIED GAMES**

1. Regular season games tied at the end of 6 innings OR time expires (with the home team completing their last at bats), will be recorded as a tie (count as ½ win).
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 second, third and home is allowed in 12U Division.
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. **Drop third strike will NOT be in effect in the 12U NATIONAL Division.**

## **BATTING**

1. Any **12U National** team must bat “every player present”.. 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. Using the “every player present” line up, if a player leaves the game due to injury or any other reason and does not return, the position in the batting order is an automatic out. After one turn the vacated position will be passed over with no further penalty.
3. Warm up swings are NEVER PERMITTED inside the dugout.
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.

## **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 either the AIA or ASA pitching motion.
4. Pitching warm-up time between innings is 1 minute or 3 pitches for returning pitchers and 5 pitches for new pitchers. This will be strictly enforced.

## **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.
3. Adults may warm-up the pitcher between innings while the catcher is getting ready.

## **UMPIRES**

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 being in conflict with the rules, the coach or captain 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 videotape by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decision is prohibited.**

## **STANDINGS AND AWARDS**

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.** head to head competition, **b.** least number of runs allowed during the match ups between the two teams, not the league schedule, **c.** flip of the coin.
3. Awards: 1<sup>st</sup> place will receive rings, and shirts; 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> will receive "Finalist Shirts".

**POST SEASON TOURNAMENT - MAY 6, 2023** There will be a double elimination tournament for each division.

1. **Every team playing in the league must commit to the tournament schedule.**

## **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. Any coach choosing to sit on a bucket or stand outside the confines of the dugout does so at their own risk. Coaches must stay within an "arm's length" of their dug out or be subject to ejection.
3. Any coach that has any type of confrontation with umpires; spectators or league representative must meet with League Coordinator before being allowed in the dugout in any consequent games.

## **GAME NOTES**

In order to optimize playing/game time please orient your teams to the following guidelines:

1. There will be 1 minute between half innings.
2. Defensive team gatherings are **NOT ALLOWED** - the time will come out of the pitcher's warm-up minute.
3. Warm-up pitches are **LIMITED**– see Pitching.

4. Use a courtesy runner for the catcher. Courtesy runner is the player that has the last recorded out.
5. Try to have a coach warm-up the pitcher while the catcher gets ready.
6. The home plate umpire may control repeated offensive and or defensive conferences by a coach to her players, if the umpire thinks time is purposely being wasted. The umpire will first issue a warning, then disqualify (throwing out) the coach/manager. This rule is written to make sure no team tries to run out the game clock out unnecessarily.

## **PROTEST**

1. Protest 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.

### **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 3:00p and then in 30 minutes increment when harsh weather is approaching. Make sure all your parents have this number. *Always assume we are playing.* Weather in the desert is fickle. It can be storming in South Tempe and be clear as a bell in North Tempe. It is NOT unusual to cancel the 6:00p game but PLAY the 7:30pm game. We will make every effort to reach you via your emergency contact number either from my office or my cell phone. Please make sure you give us a number in which you can be contacted in an emergency, or at the last possible moment in case of game cancellation.

### **LadyHawks’ Fast Pitch Softball Staff**

Bobbi Jones, Sr. Recreation Coordinator    480-350-5267    [bobbi\\_jones@tempe.gov](mailto:bobbi_jones@tempe.gov)  
Emily Fichter, Program Coordinator    480-350-5207    [emily\\_fichter@tempe.gov](mailto:emily_fichter@tempe.gov)

## RULE HIGHLIGHTS

1. Players ARE required to have their shirts tucked in.
2. Players may have duplicate numbers.
3. Players without uniforms will be able to participate – please read the clarification of this in the complete rules.
4. Drop third strike WILL APPLY.
5. LadyHawks’ allows both foot placement requirements stated in the NFHS. PITCHING stance – i.e.: two feet can be on the rubber for the start of the pitching motion OR a pitcher MAY STEP BACK, in a rocking motion for the start of the pitching motion BUT MUST BE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE RUBBER.
6. Pitcher may re-enter in the pitching position once only if: she has NOT been removed from the mound due to conferences (only 2 conferences allowed, 3<sup>rd</sup> conference results in removal of pitcher). Pitchers will NOT be required to remain in the game in order to stay eligible to pitch again. LadyHawks would like to encourage teams to switch/rotate their pitchers.
7. Scorekeepers/site supervisors will be in charge of the time clock. There will be a 70-minute time set for 12U. The game time starts when the umpire calls for “batter up!” - Not during warm up before 1<sup>st</sup> inning. (It is our goal to have at least 90 minutes of play time.)
8. Warm up between innings is limited to 3 pitches for a returning pitcher, 5 for a new pitcher. Transition time shall be held to a minimum, and all teams are required to have defensive players ready to play without any infield warm ups (with exception of 3 pitches for pitcher only.)

## PRACTICE FIELD INFORMATION:

1. Email requests to: [bobbi\\_jones@tempe.gov](mailto:bobbi_jones@tempe.gov) or [emily\\_fichter@tempe.gov](mailto:emily_fichter@tempe.gov)
2. All practices will be for 1.5 hours
3. 75% of your team must be registered to request a field
4. Please request field times that are congruent with your possible game times.
5. If you request a field for practice and do not cancel in time; i.e. By 3:30pm the afternoon of, all subsequent reservations will be WITHDRAWN.
6. If you happen to get to the practice field and someone is already playing there, please inquire if it a LadyHawks team, and when they were scheduled. **Please call Bobbi if there is any confusion: 602-577-3316.** If I am not available, please work something out with the other LadyHawks team. If it is NOT a LadyHawks team, AND I am not available, please call: Night Security at: 480-586-4229.

**IF your lights to not come on at a practice field:** Call Night security: 480-586-4229. Tell them you are a LadyHawks team and the lights are not on. Call Bobbi – 602-577-3316 if you do not get a response from night security.