



Mercer County Girls Fastpitch League Softball Playing Rules

Revised and Updated March 2026

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 September 1st 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 the 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 the entire family moves to another school district, she can 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.



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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.
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



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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. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the tournament will be used only for make-up games. There will be no regular season games initially scheduled for this week.

II. 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 to be corrected.

III. 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.
- B. Coaches Code of Conduct form must be signed and on file with MCGFL for all coaches and score keeper(s) for every team each season, to be permitted on the field.

IV. 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, 8U and 6U will use 11-inch Yellow Optic Balls with red stitches.
 - 2. Home teams must supply a new ball and a suitable backup 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



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4. 8U: 30 ft. from the back tip of home plate.
5. 6U: Coach-pitch 30 ft. from the back tip of home plate.
6. For 8U and 6U coach pitch, coaches may pitch from anywhere within the circle.

D. Official Game:

1. 18U, 14U, 12U, 10U: A game will consist of 7 innings, or 1:30 finish the inning. A game is considered regulation when 5 innings are completed (4 innings if the home team is ahead).
2. 8U, 6U: A game will consist of 6 innings or 1:30 drop dead.
3. The number of players will be no more than 9 players on defense for 12U 14U and 18U. Ten players are permitted to play for 10U, 8U, and 6U. If 10 players are playing defense, there must be an 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. Games that are cancelled and not played before the YET deadline will be scored as a 1-1 tie.

F. Time Limits:

1. Ties can occur in the regular season, and the USA Softball Tie breaker rule may be used as long as time permits. There will be no tie breakers in the regular season once time expires. Ties **cannot** occur in tournament play; teams must play until there is a winner using the USA Softball Tie breaker rule.

G. Forfeits:

1. All teams are required to field 9 players at all times during the game whenever eligible players are available to play. The 12U-18U Division teams may not field less than 8 players at any time during the game and must take an out for having only 8 players during the YET but not during the regular season. The 10U, 8U and 6U divisions are the exceptions which can field 7 players and 5 players respectively. An out will not be charged for a 10U, 8U, or 6U team having the minimum required number of players. 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. Forfeits are to be scored as 1-0 win for the home team.
2. Teams are encouraged to play a practice game if a forfeit condition should arise.



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H. Mercy Rule:

1. Games will be called after one of the following run rules occur for 8U, 10u, 12u, 14u and 18u to reflect the USA softball rules: 15/12/8 runs after 3/4/5 innings.
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, and 14U, there is an 8 run maximum per inning.
2. For 12U, 10U, 8U, and 6U there is a 5 run maximum per inning.

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. 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 if 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.

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 a helmet, facemask, chest protector, shin protector, and throat protector.



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2. 6U catchers are optional but must wear full catchers gear if behind plate.

N. Batters:

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

V. Age Specific Playing Rules

6U Specific Playing Rules:

- A. Games will be 6 full innings or 1:30 drop dead
- 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 a maximum of 7 pitches from the coach (either coach pitch or the tee) however the coach sees fit. It is the coach's discretion of the type of pitch per player for a maximum of 7 swings. If over 7 pitches, it's an out.
- 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. The infielders cannot start within 30' (halfway down the line) of batter's box before each pitch.
- I. An Arc will be 12' from back of plate. If any hit ball falls within the arc, it's a foul ball.
- J. No paid Umpires for games and no scores will be recorded by MCGFL.
- K. If batter hits the ball in the air to the outfield off the pitcher, they are able to go two bases at their own risk. If there are other players on bases, they are able to go two bases as well at their own risk.

8U Specific Playing Rules:

- L. Games will be 6 full innings or 1:30 drop dead



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- M. Games behind the plate will be called by a game manager. Game managers should be of a neutral party from the home community, a coach from a team not currently playing, OR, game manager may be an extra coach from a playing team, as long as they are agreed upon by both teams before the game begins and may not be involved in coaching during the game. All game managers must have clearances on file with their community to be on the field.
- N. Runners are not permitted to steal bases on a pitch, whether caught or passed ball. Runners are entitled to advance 1 base on an overthrow while running to base off a hit. All baserunners are liable to be put out if they are off the base. If a ball is thrown in an attempt to pickoff, the runner cannot advance.
- O. Batters may not attempt to advance to first because of a dropped third strike. The Batter is declared out and the ball remains live.
- P. If batter hits the ball in the air to the outfield off the pitcher, they are able to go two bases at their own risk. If there are other players on bases, they are able to go two bases as well at their own risk.
- Q. Pitchers cannot walk batters on balls. After the 4th pitch, the batter's coach will pitch to the following examples. The strike count carries to award the pitcher.
1. All batters are entitled to UP TO 4 pitches from a coach to allow foul balls and coach error. Batters are out after 3 strikes, regardless of remaining amount of pitches available.
 2. Example 1 = If the batter has 4 balls and no strikes, they get up to 4 pitches from the coach. 3 may be strikes. After 3 strikes are reached the batter is out, or after 4 total pitches are thrown, the batter is out.
 3. Example 2 = If the batter has 4 balls and 1 strike, they get up to 4 pitches from the coach, only 2 may be strikes. After 3 strikes are reached, or 4 total pitches are thrown, the batter is out.
 4. Example 3 = If the batter has 4 balls and 2 strikes, they get up to 4 pitches from the coach, only 1 may be a strike. After 3 strikes are reached, or 4 total pitches are thrown, the batter is out.
 5. If the player has 2 strikes & swings and misses, they are out – no exceptions. They are not entitled to any extra pitches.
 6. If a player fouls a pitch, they are entitled to additional pitches up to the limit of 7 pitches total. A player is out after the 3rd foul ball on additional pitches.
- R. 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 declared out.
- S. 10 players are permitted, but the 10th player must play a position in the outfield. The 8U division is meant to be an instructional league, therefore no more than 6 infielders are permitted in the infield. However, an outfielder can come into the infield to field a ball.
- T. Infield Fly Rule is in place in 8U.

10U Specific Playing Rules:



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- U. Runners are entitled to advance or steal one base only per pitch. All baserunners 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 one base at their own risk. This rule ONLY applies to runners attempting to steal or advance a base as a result of 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) occurs as a result of a batted ball.
 - 1. One runner may attempt to steal home per batter.
 - V. 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.
 - W. After 3 consecutive walks by the pitcher, coach pitch is permitted after the pitcher has pitched 4 balls to the batter. The strike count carries to award the pitcher. The coach may pitch one pitch to the batter for each remaining strike, until the batter strikes out or places a ball into play.
 - 1. Any interruption of the 3 consecutive walks resets the walk count – IE, HBP, base hit, steal, hit, pickoff, etc.
 - X. 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 declared out.
 - Y. 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 no more than 6 infielders are permitted in the infield. However, an outfielder can come into the infield to field a ball.
 - Z. Infield Fly Rule is in place in 10u.
- VI. 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. The protest committee consists of the President, Vice President, and Head Umpire. Contact information for these individuals can be found on the Mercer County Girls Fast Pitch Softball Home Page (<https://www.htosports.com/teams/?u=MERCERCOUNTYGIRLSFAS1&s=softball>)
 - B. A protest must be delivered to the league president within 48 hours.



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- 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. YEAR END TOURNAMENTS:

- 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) has 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 and end on the night voted and approved by the MCGFL board with the exception of weather delays. The best interest of the girls must be taken into consideration when scheduling games.
- D. Seeding
 - Single elimination will be used for all age division YETs
 - 6U/8U, random seeding;
 - All other divisions; winning percentage from the Wednesday before tournament 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
 - If there are an odd number of teams, only the 1 seed will be awarded a bye.
- 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 an injury or an upward roster move.



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- 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.
- L. 8U Specific Rules:
 - The USA softball mercy rule is in effect.
 - The games will be 1:30 minutes long finish the inning. If the score is tied, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Championship game(s) will be 6innings with no time limit. However, the USA mercy rule applies. If the score is tied after 6 complete innings, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
- M. 10U Specific Rules:
 - The USA softball mercy rule is in effect.
 - The games will be 1:30 minutes long finish the inning. If the score is tied, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Championship game(s) will be 7 innings with no time limit. However, the USA mercy rule applies. If the score is tied after 7 complete innings, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Two umpires will be used for the championship game(s).
- N. 12U Specific Rules:
 - The USA softball mercy rule is in effect.
 - The games will be 1:30 minutes long finish the inning. If the score is tied, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Championship game(s) will be 7 innings with no time limit. However, the USA mercy rule applies. If the score is tied after 7 complete innings, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Two umpires will be used for semi-finals and championship games only.
- O. 14U, 16U & 18U Specific Rules:
 - The USA softball mercy rule is in effect.
 - The games will be 1:30 minutes long finish the inning. If the score is tied, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Semi-Final and Championship game(s) will be 7 innings with no time limit. However, the USA mercy rule applies. If the score is tied after 7 complete innings, USA Softball tie breaker rule will be utilized until there is a winner.
 - Two umpires will be used for semi-finals and championship games only.