

**Hillcrest Girls' Fast Pitch Rules**  
**14 & Under**  
*(Updated April 15, 2010)*

***The Hillcrest League Director has established the rules presented herein. The official NFHS rulebook will be used as the governing instrument for game officiating except for rules listed below.***

1. All players must be of proper age based on league guidelines. No older than a graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grader. The League Director must approve any possible exceptions to this rule. If a team uses an illegal or ineligible player during a game, they will forfeit the game and any previous game the illegal or ineligible player participated in.
2. All team rosters must be finalized and turned into League Director by May 1. Any special circumstances must be brought in front of the commissioner. All teams will be given a copy of each team's roster before the start of the season.
3. Free substitution for defense is permitted for all games.
4. There is no limit on how many players are allowed on the roster.
5. Call-ups may be used but can only play if all the players on the roster that are present are playing. Borrowing a player to play up in a higher age league is permitted within the limits of this rule. Borrowing a player for use in the same league or lower league is not permitted. A player may be borrowed to play up only if the requesting team would have less than 10 players. Players must be called from the league directly below the calling league (or an expressly approved league). A player from any other league will be considered an ineligible player.

In the event that the requesting team has enough of its official roster at game-time and has already borrowed a player, the borrowed player will, unless there is an injury causing a player on the official roster to be removed from the game, play three (3) complete innings. Borrowed players shall only play in the outfield and bat in the bottom 1/3 of the batting order.

6. There will be continuous batting for all players on the roster. This means that every player bats in the assigned batting order. In the event of an injury, the batters spot is not counted as an out.
7. Courtesy runners, if used, will be for catchers only after two outs are recorded in the inning. Courtesy runner will be the player that is the last recorded out for that team.
8. The highest number of players on any team dictates how many can bat around in any inning...
9. Batting around the order or 8 runs, whichever comes first, will end each inning.
10. To play a legal game, each team must field a minimum of 8 players and a maximum of 10 players with 6 infielders maximum. Teams may not play a short outfielder. Any violation of this rule will result in forfeiture of the game. **Late arrival: Any player arriving after a team has batted around its order will not be able to play that game.**
11. There will be a ten-minute grace period given if a team has less than eight players present.
12. Each player participating in a game must play defense at least 2 of the first 4 innings.

13. An official game is 5 innings, 4-1/2 if the home team is winning. If the game is called before it is official, it will be started over on the make-up date.
14. **Mercy Rule:** The game will be called if a team is winning by 12 runs after 5 innings.
15. Stealing bases is allowed for all bases in girls' fast pitch. The player may not leave a base until the pitcher releases the pitch. The umpire will give a warning to the team if a player leaves the base too early. If a second warning is issued, the umpire will call out the player.
16. Sliding is optional. A runner may go into a base or home plate standing up; however, a runner cannot go into a base or home plate standing up and make contact with the fielder or alter the play of the fielder, this is an umpire's judgment. The penalty to the runner in such a case is an out. If the contact is deemed malicious, the runner is out and may be removed from the game. Based upon the severity of the collision, the umpire shall decide if the player should be ejected (**refer to the ejection rule**).
17. All batters and base runners must use batting helmets that include facemasks.
18. Only official softball bats will be used.
19. A safety bag must be used on first base.
20. A 12" optic yellow fast pitch softball with raised stitches will be used.
21. Catchers helmet must be worn with a facemask and throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards.
22. Game limits shall be 7 innings or 2 hours, which ever comes first. No new inning can begin after 2 hours from the scheduled start time. If a game reaches the time limit, it is an officially completed game regardless of how many innings are played.
23. A pitching circle with a diameter of 16 feet or a radius of 8 feet will be lined on the field. The pitching mound distance is 40 feet and the bases are 60 feet.
24. **Look-Back Rule:** When a runner is off base after a pitch or as a result of the batter completing her turn at bat, and is stationary when the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or immediately return to the base she has occupied. Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to her original base after the pitcher has the ball within the circle will result in the runner being declared out.
25. All players on a team shall properly wear like uniforms distributed by their respective city.
26. All players shall wear rubber molded spikes or tennis shoes. No metal spikes will be allowed.
27. If a player throws her bat for the first time, teams will be issued a warning. The second time any player on the team that was issued the warning throws her bat, an automatic out will be given to the team (unless the umpire deems the bat-throwing incident unsportsmanlike). (**Refer to the ejection rule**)
28. Home team will provide one game ball and one back-up ball.
29. If a team does not have enough players to start a game and have to forfeit, they must pay the entire umpire fee that night and will lose their forfeit fee.
30. **Pitching changes:** There will be **only 2** pitching changes per inning.
31. **Defensive time outs:** Only 1 defensive time out per inning.
32. If lightening or thunder is seen or heard the teams must leave the open field area and seek shelter if the game is not called by the umpire and wait thirty minutes to resume from the last lightening or thunder.

## **TROPHIES**

1. **SEASON CHAMPIONS:** The team with the best record at the end of the regular season. The city of this team will provide trophies for the players if they choose to do so.
2. **TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS:** The team that wins the single elimination tournament following the conclusion of the regular season. The city of this team will provide trophies to the players if they choose to do so.
3. We expect all cities and teams that choose to join our league to participate in our league tournament.

## **CONDUCT**

1. Managers will be held responsible for the conduct of all players, coaches, and fans on their team. Please inform your team of all league policies, rules, and procedures before the start of the season.
2. Obscene language, disobeying the officials and poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.
3. The mission of our league is that of instruction and fair play. We expect our coaches to share in this philosophy and encourage them to show mercy and good sportsmanship in games that they are dominating. We expect our managers in such games to coach accordingly as we do not want to humiliate any child, team, or manager.

## **EJECTION RULE**

1. Any player or coach ejected from a league game for any unsportsmanlike reason will draw an automatic one game suspension from the next scheduled game played by their team.
2. The manager is held responsible that the ejected player from their team does not play in the next scheduled game.
3. A second ejection during the season will result in potential removal from the league (pending judgment by the Hillcrest League Board).

## **SUSPENDED PLAYERS**

1. Players, managers, or coaches suspended by the league are not permitted to participate in any way under any condition. Suspended player is not allowed on the bench while under suspension.
2. This rule positively forbids umpires from accepting mutual agreements between managers regarding the use of ineligible or suspended players or coaches.

## **PROTESTING A GAME**

A protest must be made and delivered to the League Director within 48 hours of the start of the game in question.

The notification of intent to protest must be made immediately ***before*** the next pitch. The manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the home plate umpire that the game is being conducted under protest. The umpire shall, in turn, notify the opposing manager and scorekeeper. All interested parties shall take notice of the conditions

surrounding the protest.

The umpire must record the following information when advised that the game is being played under protest: the date, time, and place of the game; the location of base runners; the batter; the ball and strike count and the number of outs. The umpire must also sign each official scorebook.

The written protest shall contain the following information:

- The date, time and place of the game
- The names of the umpire(s)
- The rule and section of the official playing rules or local rules under which the protest is made.
- The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision
- All essential facts involved in the matter protested

**PROTEST WILL NOT BE RECEIVED OR CONSIDERED IF THEY ARE BASED SOLELY ON A DECISION INVOLVING THE ACCURACY OF JUDGEMENT ON THE PART OF THE UMPIRE.**

However, protest may involve both a matter of judgment and an interpretation of a rule. Once the game is completed and both teams have left the field, no protest can be filed.

EXCEPTION: Player eligibility may be protested at any time before the end of the regular season.

**Note:** This rule will not be in effect during tournaments.

**POINTS OF EMPHASIS:**

We have had problems in the past with delaying of games and very slow paced games and are going to work at correcting this. The league, parents and children want to play as many innings as possible and not fall victim to stalling coaches or just slow change of innings.

A) **Batter Delays**

The pace of a game can only be enhanced when players, batters in particular, comply with the 20-second rule (7-3-1 NFHS rule book). The intent of the rule is for the batter to be ready to step into the batters box and take her turn at bat in a timely fashion. To abuse this rule by excessive waiting, meetings or prolonged signaling from the coach, disconcerts the pitcher, stalls the game and is not the intent of the rule.

A batter has 20 seconds to take her place in the batters box. In order to this requirement, coaches should be concise in their signaling from the coaching box. The penalty for noncompliance is a strike being called on the batter.

Once in the batters box, the batter may request a "time", but it should only be granted for a valid reason. Batters should not be permitted to step into the batters box and meet the 20 second requirement, only to delay the game calling time to perform rituals in the box or then meet with the coach again. This is not a valid reason for an umpire to grant time.

A batter stepping in and out of the batters box when the pitcher is ready to pitch is subject to the penalty of a strike being called (3-6-9).

- B) We are stressing the use of rule 7 that states you may and will use a pinch runner for your catcher with 2 outs so we can get her off the field and into her equipment instead of wasting 10 minutes between innings.
- C) Keeping coaches in control of themselves and players which in turn will calm and control the fans. Respect will be demanded from all to the umpires. If there is a problem with the umpire tell our league officials.

# Hillcrest 14 & Under Fast Pitch League

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Winning team is responsible for calling in scores that night or next morning to (440) 473-0559 or preferably e-mail to: [terry@roadrunner.com](mailto:terry@roadrunner.com)
- All home teams are responsible for determining condition of field playability. If at all possible, please determine a rainout two hours before game time. If game is rained out, home team should contact the respective Umpire's Association to cancel umpires. All games in Cuyahoga County should contact John Mihalina at (216) 691-3765 (home) or (216) 544-8331 (cell). This responsibility is an absolute **MUST!!** If umpires are not cancelled by home team and show up at field without teams showing up, the resulting consequence will be the home team will be responsible for paying total umpire's fees for that night. After these notifications, contact Terry or Kathy at (440) 473-0559 or (216) 849-9329. Also, please call manager of visiting team so they do not travel needlessly. If not contacted two hours prior to game time, teams and umpires will be expected to show up at field and it will become a game-time decision.
- Rainouts will be rescheduled at the earliest possible time. Make-up dates should be determined by affected managers and reported to commissioner to schedule umpires. Rainouts are mandated to be made up within 10 days after cancelled game otherwise it will be played on Friday night or weekend at a neutral sight. If a team is unable to play this game, it will be considered a forfeit. Neutral fields could be used for make-ups. Playoffs will not be postponed.
- For the end of season tournament, 2 umpires will be used for all games; each city pays for 1 umpire. Tournament format will be a single elimination tournament.
- Just a reminder, home team is to supply game balls and umpire's fees (\$40.00) are to be split (\$20.00 for home team and \$20.00 for visiting team). If the game starts, even one pitch, the umpire will receive ½ of the game fee split by the two teams. If you have to forfeit the game, the forfeiting team shall pay the whole fee that night to the umpire. Make sure you have money to pay umpires each night (they don't like umpiring on credit).
- Let's have a fun year and play by the spirit of the rules remembering that this game is for the girls and not our egos. If any problems arise, please contact us immediately. I'm expecting this year to run smoothly, weather, commissioners and managers doing their part.
- All requests to reschedule a game not due to weather must be made 48 hours prior to scheduled date. Result of not following this rule will be forfeiture of scheduled game.
- Winning team's manager is responsible for calling or emailing the score within 24 hours to the commissioner.