



2026 FAST PITCH 9-11 SOFTBALL SPRING LEAGUE RULES (Updated March 24, 2026)

GOVERNING AUTHORITY

The Burke County Recreation Department's Coach Pitch League will be governed by the current rules and regulations of the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association and Diamond Youth Softball and National Federation/ Georgia High School Association, with the exceptions found in this manual.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The Age Determination Date for a DYS Softball Player is the actual age of a player on December 31st of the previous year.
- B. The age division for Fast Pitch is nine (9) years old to eleven (11) years old.
- C. A participant is allowed to compete in one age division only. All participants are required to play in their correct age division.

FIELD SPECIFICATIONS

- A. Distance between bases shall be **sixty feet (60')**.
- B. Pitching Rubber is at thirty-five feet (35') from home plate with a sixteen-foot (16') diameter circle around the rubber.

COACH'S APPLICATION, BACKGROUND CHECK AND CERTIFICATION

- A. All coaches must complete a coach's application form and submit it to the Recreation Department for approval.
- B. In order to ensure the safety of our participants, all coaches are subjected to a background check. Each coach must complete a consent to background check form. The Burke County Sheriff's Department will conduct a background check on each coach. If the background check is approved (see Background Check policy of the BCRD for further details), a coach will then be considered in the coach's application process.
- C. The Recreation Department will provide at least one certification opportunity for all coaches and assistant coaches. The certification fee will be paid by the Recreation Department for all coaches and assistant coaches in attendance. Coaches not attending will be responsible for attending a certification program

elsewhere, prior to the beginning of the season. The Recreation Department will not reimburse the fee. It is mandatory that all coaches be certified.

- D. No one is allowed on the field or in the dugout with the children until they have been approved through the above mentioned process.
- E. Coaches and any approved personnel must be attired in the Recreation Department issued uniform for all games.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

- A. Shoes are mandatory for play in youth softball games. Rubber-molded, cleated shoes are approved for use. Smooth and soft-soled athletic shoes, including tennis or basketball shoes are acceptable. Steel spikes are prohibited.
- B. Team uniforms will be issued by the Recreation Department. Players must be in uniform to play (uniform consists of jersey, pants, socks, belt, and hat/visor).
 - a. Managers, coaches, team moms and/or team scorers who are in the dugout or on the field, must be attired in the designated Recreation Department coach's shirts (provided that they have been delivered) and must pass a background check and be approved.
 - b. Team caps/visors will be issued by the Recreation Department and are the only hats that may be worn by the players; however, it is not mandatory that the hats be worn.
 - c. Illegal uniforms and shoes will be treated as illegal equipment.
- C. Helmets **with facemask** must be worn by batters, baserunners and on deck participants. The helmet shall be so designed as to give protection to the temples and the base of the skull as well as to the top of the head.
- D. The child playing in the pitching position is required to wear a protective facemask. **All infielders are highly recommended to wear a protective facemask.**
- E. The official bat shall be round, and made of wood, metal, or other material acceptable for batting as approved by rules governing play in the Dixie Youth League. Regulation aluminum bats which meet NFHS (National Federation of High Schools) standards are permitted in all divisions. Look for the markings: "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL," "YOUTH SOFTBALL," or "FASTPITCH SOFTBALL" on the barrel or taper of a bat to know if it is approved. Approved youth bats are no more than 34" in length. Bats may not exceed 2 1/4" in diameter.
- F. Gloves and mitts are governed by the DYS rule. Pitcher's gloves must not be distracting to the batter, and it is preferred that they are of a single color-including laces and stitching. The color cannot match the softball.
- G. Catchers must wear full protective equipment including a mask with throat protector, protective cap (must cover ears), body protector, and shin guards. The

umpire shall inspect each catcher's full protective equipment prior to the game to determine its safety. The helmet must be approved by NOCSAE.

- H. The official ball shall be that as permitted for play in Diamond Youth Softball. Teams will use 11" softballs core .47 Optic Yellow ball.

LENGTH OF GAMES

- A. A game is complete when the following conditions have been met.
1. Time Limit expires or Six (6) full innings.
 2. Four (4) complete innings due to rain or bad weather.
 3. Twelve (12) runs after three (3) innings (all players have to bat on both sides).
Ten (10) runs after four (4) innings.
Eight (8) runs after five (5) innings.
- B. The score of a forfeited game shall be recorded as 7 – 0.
- C. There is a one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) time limit per game. No New inning after an hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) The next inning starts as soon as the third out is made in the bottom of the last inning. If there is a batter batting when the time limit expires, the teams will finish the inning (unless the home team is batting and is winning). The scorekeeper will announce the starting game time so that all parties know the time of expiration. The time is left on the scoreboard, but if the scoreboard malfunctions, the scorekeeper will periodically announce the time left in the game.
- D. **With ten (10) minutes or less remaining in the game:** When the visiting team is 10 runs ahead after three (3) complete innings, or if the home team would be mathematically unable to tie or win the game in the fourth (4th) inning due to the run limit, the game may be called at the end of the third inning. This same rule can apply in later innings, but only comes into effect at the end of the third inning.
- Ex) At the end of the third (3rd) inning, the visitors are up 11-4 and there are eight (8) minutes left on the clock. The home team would not be able to win the game by the end of the next inning (because of the five run per inning rule), so the game may be called at the end of the third (3rd) inning.

GAME RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. A minimum of seven (7) players must be fielded in order for the game to be official. If a team does not field enough players, the game will be declared a forfeit. A team may pick up extra players to let their team play (those players

must be enrolled in our program); however, the game will still remain a forfeit. When a team is playing with less than nine (9) players, the position(s) that is vacant will be declared out each time they come to bat. The coach may place the automatic out(s) any place in his lineup. A team may continue a game with one less player than they started with, in the event a player must leave the game; however, an out will be declared each time that player's position comes to bat.

- B. Game time is forfeit time.
- C. The choice of first or last at bat (home-visitors designation) shall be determined by the game schedule unless during tournament play then it will be the higher seed (1 being the highest seed) as the home team.
- D. All players present at the game will bat in a continuous batting order as listed in the book. This means that every child on the team will be in the lineup.
 1. If a player is late, they will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 2. Injured player – If it is an injured player's time at bat, the coach may take the out (allowing the player to reenter). If the coach determines that the injured player is not able to play, there will be no out in the batting order (and the player may not reenter the game).
 3. Ejected player – out in batting order.\
- E. There will be three outs or five (5) runs per inning, whichever comes first.
- F. Every child is required to play two innings per game in the field. If a coach fails to obey this rule, the game will be forfeited. With the free substitution rule in effect, because of the continuous batting order, this should not be a problem. A coach may bring a child in and out of the game as many times as he would like. (Please let scorekeeper know when bringing in a sub for the first time).
- G. Games will be allowed to end in a tie. If game time has expired and the score is tied at the end of the inning, the game will be called as a tie.
- H. The infield fly rule is in effect. This call will be made at the umpire's discretion.
- I. There will be four (4) outfielders in the field, provided your team has the numbers to place ten (10) players in the field.
- J. It is an automatic out if the runner does not attempt to avoid contact or slide at home plate and runs over the catcher. If the official feels the contact was intentional, the runner will be ejected.
- K. A runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact with a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag. Penalty: the ball is dead and the runner is out. Other base runners shall take the bases they had reached, in the umpire's judgement when the violation occurred.
- L. Intentional walks are not allowed.

- M. If a batter slings her bat, **she receives one** warning. After the one warning she will be considered out if she continues to sling her bat.
- N. At any time the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. The courtesy runner will be the last recorded out.
- O. When approaching a base, the runner must slide feet first. The only time a runner may slide face first is when they are returning to a base. Runners in a run-down situation may not slide headfirst.
- P. The umpires will make appeal calls (missing bases, etc.) after all action has ceased (as per Major League Baseball rules).
- Q. Three strikes constitute an out. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
- R. Stealing is allowed once the ball has left the pitcher's hand. The baserunner cannot lead off, but can leave as soon as the ball is released and must return to the base during each dead ball.
- S. Bunting is permitted. No fake bunts allowed. A player (showing bunt) may not fake bunt and swing in an effort to hit the ball. **PENALTY: First time-** team warning and dead ball. **Second time-** The batter is out, the ball is dead, and the team receives a final warning. **Third time-** The batter is out, the ball is dead, and the head coach is removed from the game. The team will be issued one warning and if it happens again, the head coach will be removed from the game.
- T. When the pitcher has possession of the ball and gets in the circle, the baserunner has to commit one way. (if runner changes direction or stops, they can be called out)
- U. The base runner is allowed to "tag up" if a fly ball is caught.
- V. Runners must slide feet first or avoid contact at home plate if the catcher is making a tag on the runner. Coaches are encouraged to have their catcher move off the plate if there is not a play to be made at home plate. No head first sliding is allowed at any base. **PENALTY:** Runner is out. A dive back is not considered a head first slide.
- W. A batted ball, unless called a foul by the umpire, is live and in play until the defense stops the progress of the lead runner, the pitcher has the ball inside the circle, or the umpire calls time. This will be at the umpire's judgment and cannot be appealed. Note: There are no "half way" marks on the field. A player cannot call time. (We do not want the kids to hold the ball in the air and call time.) We want the kids to learn how to use the softball to stop the runners. Once time has been called by the official, the ball remains dead until the next batter.

CHARGED CONFERENCES

- A. Each team when on defense may be granted not more than three (3) charged conferences during a game without penalty, to permit a coach or his representative to confer with a defensive player or players including his pitcher. A request for time for this purpose may be made by a coach, player, substitute or any other team member.
- B. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference nor shall a conference be charged whenever the pitcher is removed as pitcher. In extra inning games, a team on defense may have one conference per inning without penalty.
- C. The penalty for using conferences in excess of the above mentioned times shall be removal of pitcher from the pitching position for the balance of the game.
- D. Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of that team's members to confer with base runners and/or the batter. The umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team request for charged conferences.

PRACTICES

- A. Coaches may not hold their first practice until after the specific date assigned by the Recreation Department. Any team found in violation of this policy will be subject to game forfeiture(s) determined by the number of practices held before the said date.
- B. It is preferred that practices be limited to one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes, but a maximum of two (2) hours is allowed. All practices **must be completed by 9:00 pm**. Remember that the children have homework and other school requirements.
- C. It is the policy of the Burke County Recreation Department to avoid hosting youth activities on Wednesday nights whenever possible, due to church activities. Coaches may conduct practices on Wednesday nights; however, the practice cannot be considered mandatory, and a child cannot be penalized for not attending. This same policy applies to weekend and spring break practices.
- D. If you are the last one to use the field, please make sure that you clean up any trash left on the field or in the dugouts.
- E. Before leaving the Recreation Department Complex, please make sure that all of the children on your team are with a **Responsible Adult** or that a **Recreation Department Staff Member has been notified**.
- F. Anytime that our office cancels practice or games, coaches are not allowed to practice their teams on our complex. We usually do this because of the

conditions of the fields or weather and ONLY as a last resort. If you choose to disregard our notice, you will be suspended from coaching the next scheduled game. The only exception is if games are canceled due to a conflicting activity.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

- A. The fields and facilities at Jonathan Broxton Park are monitored by the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction and Warning System. This system is designed to predict a lightning strike within a defined geographical region.
- B. When the conditions for a lightning strike exist, the Thor Guard system will give a 15-second blast on the horn cluster that can be heard approximately 700 yards away. At the same time, a yellow strobe visible from most areas of the park will activate and stay on until the danger has passed or at least 10 minutes after the last detection of lightning. Once the potential for a lightning strike has passed, the system will activate the horns giving the all-clear signal – three, five second blasts -- and the strobe light will go off.
- C. Anytime that the strobe light is on, participants should take cover inside a building or their vehicle and are not allowed on the playing fields, playground, basketball court or outdoor areas.
- D. Anyone not following these guidelines when the Thor Guard warning is activated and remains outdoors or in an inappropriate area or shelter will do so at their own risk.
- E. If the alarm is activated during a game, officials will clear the area and ask all participants and spectators to go to their vehicles. If the system has not given an all clear within 30 minutes, the games will be called for the evening. (Refer to policies regarding completed games to determine if the game in session will be complete, rescheduled, etc.) Prior to leaving, check our Facebook Page (Burke County Recreation Department) or look for an email from our department confirming that all activities are suspended for the evening.
- F. Check the Burke County Recreation Department's Inclement Weather Policy for more detailed information.

COACH'S RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. After team selection, it is your responsibility to inform the players of your team that you are their coach and when you will be scheduling practices.
- B. Conduct a parent's meeting. Get the parents involved. Let them set up refreshment schedules. Make sure they know that good sportsmanship is **MANDATORY**.

- C. Make sure that you fill out a coach's application as well as a consent form for a background check. The Recreation Commission has implemented policy of requiring a background check on all volunteers as a means of protecting the children who participate in our programs.
- D. No tobacco is allowed on the playing field (smoking, vaping, or chewing).
- E. To help cut down on confusion, it is requested that all coaches stay in the dugout area while your team is on defense, unless a defensive time-out is called.
- F. Coaches, only, should turn their line-up in to the scorekeeper. Once a line-up is recorded in the book, it is official. Coaches are expected to turn in first and last names and the number of each player.
- G. Only the head coach may confer with the umpire, then only for one (1) minute during a charged conference granted by the umpire.
- H. Coaches must notify the Recreation Department in case of injury to any player, whether the accident occurred at a game or at practice. An injured player must be cleared by the Recreation Department before he/she can play or practice. (Accident/Injury forms are supplied in your coach's manual.)
- I. A coach must stay in the coach's box while his/her team is on offense. They may not interfere with a defensive play.
- J. There will be no stopping the game to get a Recreation Department Official. If there is a problem, the game may be played under protest.
- K. A coach is the only person that may file a protest. A protest may not be filed on a judgment call. It may be filed only if there is a rule violation. In the event of a protest, the coach must present the protest in writing within twenty-four (24) hours and the protest must be accompanied by a \$25.00 filing fee. If the protest is upheld, the \$25.00 will be refunded.
- L. Anytime that our office cancels practice or games, coaches are not allowed to practice their teams on our complex. We usually do this because of the conditions of the fields or weather and ONLY as a last resort. If you choose to disregard our notice, you will be suspended from coaching the next scheduled game. The only exception is if games are canceled due to a conflicting activity
- M. Anytime that our office notifies you of a change in schedule, it is your responsibility to contact all your players on your team.
- N. In the event of rain, the Recreation Department will inform **you** if the games or practices have been canceled. **You must then get in touch with your team.** Please make sure that we have all telephone/cell numbers and current contact information so that we can locate you. Check internet site (www.burkerec.com) or our Facebook page (Burke County Recreation Department) for up to the minute notices regarding inclement weather and cancelled games.

- O. Any coach that is unable to consistently reach a child (for practices, etc.) should notify the Recreation Department immediately so that we can see if we can reach them.
- P. If you have a problem with your team equipment, need additional equipment, etc., **please contact our office before 3:30 p.m.** so staff can have your equipment ready for you by time of practice. Do not wait until practice time to let us know. If you do, it may be the next day before your request can be filled.
- Q. If you are the last one to leave the field for the evening, please make sure that you clean up all trash on the field and in the dugouts.
- R. Before leaving the Recreation Department complex, please make sure that all of the children on your team are with a responsible adult or that a Recreation Department official has been notified.
- S. Remember, you set the mood for the team. **Your attitude is the most important one on the field.** If you are pleasant and have a positive attitude and show good sportsmanship, so will your parents and players.
- T. Sign an inventory sheet of equipment issued to you at the beginning of the season. Make sure that all equipment is in the bag when returned at the end of the season. Equipment is to be returned immediately following your last scheduled game.
- U. See practice section about field schedule for practices. If you would like to add a practice, please call the Recreation Department for additional practice times.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. Good sportsmanship is expected and demanded of all participants, coaches and team followers.
- B. Players, coaches, and spectators are to refrain from making derogatory comments or using inflammatory actions to opposing players, coaches or teams calculated to make a misplay.
- C. Anyone who touches or threatens an official or employee affiliated with the operation of an organized activity will be suspended for at least a year from all organized recreation activities and will be required to pay a \$100 reinstatement fee before they will be eligible to compete again or attend any recreation department activities. They could also face criminal charges!
- D. Any individual directly involved in an activity that is ejected from a game for any reason other than violence, must pay a \$25 reinstatement fee for the first offense. If a second ejection occurs, the individual is suspended from any organized recreation activity for at least one year and must pay a \$100 reinstatement fee before they will be eligible to participate in any organized recreation activity.

PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS CONDUCT

- A. Any player, coach, or spectator acting in an unsportsmanlike manner or in any way that could prove detrimental to the league, will be subject to disciplinary action by the Recreation Department. If the coach cannot control the situation, the game will be awarded to the opposing team. The person or persons violating this rule shall be suspended for the following game. (Judgment shall be made by either the umpires or the Recreation staff.)
- B. Any player, coach, or spectator disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct, including abusive language, is ineligible for further participation in the game in progress, plus the next game played and may be dismissed from the league.
- C. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child attends all practices and games. Any child who misses two (2) consecutive practices or games can be benched by the coach for one game, with the approval of the Recreation Department. Any child who continuously misses practices or games will be dismissed from the team. It is the coach's responsibility to notify the Recreation Department of any child's missed games or practices.
- D. No alcoholic products should be consumed before or during activities involving your team.
- E. No Smoking, vaping, or tobacco use allowed in our parks.
- F. No Animals allowed on the playing fields and must have a leash on while at the park.