



CITY OF KNOXVILLE

Parks and Recreation

KNOXVILLE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT YOUTH BASEBALL & SOFTBALL RULES

2023

Baseball Rules

Based on USSSA Baseball Rules with minor changes determined by Board of Commissioners

Softball Rules

Based on USA Softball Rules with minor changes
Determined by Board of Commissioners

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Knoxville Parks & Recreation Department
2023 Youth Baseball / Softball Rules
(Developed by the Board of Youth Baseball/Softball Commissioners)

I. RULES GOVERNING PLAY

- A. KPRD Youth Softball shall follow USA Softball Rules
- B. KPRD Youth Baseball league play shall follow USSSA Baseball Rules
- C. Exceptions to the rules from the governing bodies listed above (USA & USSSA) will govern KPRD regular season league play and City Tournament play.

II. PLAYING REQUIREMENTS / AGE ELIGIBILITY

- A. All players must be 4 years old on April 1, 2023.
 - i. Example: If a player's date of birth is 3/31/2019, the player is considered 4 years old. If a player's date of birth is 4/4/2019, the player would be considered 3 years old and not eligible.
- B. Players may play up in an older age division, but cannot return to the younger age group for City Tournament play.
- C. Players may only compete for 1 team in the KPRD Regular Season.

SOFTBALL

- D. The player's age on January 1, 2023 shall dictate which division a player must play
- E. Boys may not participate on girls softball teams.

BASEBALL

- F. Girls may participate on boys teams.
- G. The player's age on May 1, 2023 shall dictate which division a player must play
 - i. Example: If a player's date of birth is 5/1/2012, the player is considered 11 years old and eligible for the 12U division.
 - ii. Example: If a player's date of birth is 4/30/2012, the player is considered 9 years old and must play in the 10U division.

III. COACH SELECTION & COACHING REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Coach Selection** – Each commission shall recruit volunteers to coach youth teams based on players and teams.
- B. **Background Checks** - All coaches must complete and successfully pass a national background check every 2 years. Coaches who completed this requirement during football or basketball season shall provide documentation and will not have to complete another national check for 2 years. Coaches must receive confirmation that they have passed the background screening before coaching a regular season game. This applies to all coaches for a team, head and assistant. A final decision granting a coach the right to coach a team will be determined by the City of Knoxville.
- C. **First Aid/CPR/AED Training** - Coaches are encouraged to receive education, training, and become certified in case of an emergency.

**IV. CONCUSSION & SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST TRAINING
(FOR PARENTS, PLAYERS, & COACHES)**

The Tennessee State Government passed a law that requires all youth athletic activities establish guidelines to inform and educate coaches, youth athletics, parents/guardians, and other adults involved in youth athletics about the nature, risk, and symptoms of concussion, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest. In accordance with the law, the following are required:



- A. **Coaches** – Prior to the first practice or competition, all coaches (head & assistant, volunteer or paid) must review and sign a concussion, head injury, and sudden cardiac arrest information sheet.
 - B. **Parents/Guardians & Youth Athletes** – Prior to the first practice or competition, all youth athletes and the athlete’s parent/guardian shall review a concussion, head injury, and sudden cardiac arrest information sheet. A form confirming this review shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete’s parent/guardian.
 - C. **“When in doubt, sit them out”** – Any youth athlete who shows signs, symptoms, and behavior consistent with a concussion or sudden cardiac arrest shall immediately be removed from the activity or competition for evaluation by the coach, license health care profession, if available, or other designated person.
 - D. No youth athlete who has been removed from play due to suspected concussion or sudden cardiac arrest shall return to practice or competition until the youth athlete is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play. (Health care provider shall be a certified athletic trainer, licensed nurse practitioner, physician’s assistant, medical doctor, or osteopathic physician)
- More information can be found in the Youth Sports Concussion Policy and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Policy.

V. TEAM FORMATION

- A. Each commission may set own procedures for team formation.

VI. OPEN vs. REC TEAMS

- A. Commissions shall determine if teams are an Open or Rec team. Commissions are advised to not enter teams in the Rec division that should be in the Open Division.

VII. SCHEDULES

- A. Games shall be played in accordance with the schedule developed by the host Commission and approved by KPRD with each team scheduled to play 10 regular season games.
- B. **Suggested Regular Season Start/End Dates**
 - i. 6U-12U Regular Season League Play may begin for 6u-12u on April 3, 2023 and conclude by May 26, 2023.
 - ii. 14U Regular Season League Play may begin on March 28, 2023 and conclude by May 26, 2023.

VIII. LENGTH OF GAMES

- A. **Innings / Time Limits for Baseball & Softball**

Age Group	Max Innings	Time Limit/No Innings Starts After
6U Tball	6	55 Minutes
Boys 8U	6	55 Minutes
Boys 10U	6	1 Hour 15 Minutes
Boys 12U	6	1 Hour 25 Minutes
Boys 14U	7	1 Hour 30 Minutes
Girls 8U	6	55 Minutes
Girls 10U	7	1 Hour
Girls 12U	7	1 Hour



B. Mercy Rules for Baseball & Softball

Boys 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U & Girls 8U

Run Differential	Stop After
15	3 rd Inning
8	4 th Inning

Boys 14U & Girls 10U, 12U

15	3 rd Inning
12	4 th Inning
8	5 th Inning

C. Tie Games for Baseball & Softball

- i. International Tie-Breaker will be used.
 - 1. International Tie-Breaker – The new inning shall begin with the last player to have an official at-bat in the previous inning shall go to 2nd base to start the new inning.
- ii. Regular season games shall play 1 extra inning if the game is tied at the end of regulation time/innings, whichever occurs first. The game will be recorded as a tie if the teams are tied after 1 extra inning.
- iii. In Tournament play, the game shall be played until a winner is determined.

IX. GAME OFFICIALS

- A. **Training.** Mandatory training will be provided for umpires.
- B. **Umpires.** Umpires rate of pay and number per game are determined by KPRD. Commissions shall schedule approved umpires during the regular season. KPRD shall schedule umpires during the City Tournament.
 - i. 6U & 8U – 1 umpire. Commissions may provide and pay a 2nd umpire if desired.
 - ii. 10U, 12U, & 14U – 2 umpires. Games shall begin if only 1 umpire is present.
- C. **Scorekeepers.** Commissions shall schedule and pay scorekeepers during regular season games. During City Tournament play, the home team will provide a scorekeeper.
- D. **Background Checks.** All Officials and Scorekeepers must have completed and successfully passed a background check to be eligible to work with the City of Knoxville Youth Baseball/Softball League. The City of Knoxville will have the final determination on a person’s clearance to work as an official or game management staff.

X. AGE GROUP PLAYING RULES

Also see “Youth Baseball Rules Summary”

1. 6U – T-Ball

- A. **Field Dimensions.**
 - i. Bases: 60 feet
 - ii. Foul Ball Arc: 20 feet
 - iii. Safety Arc: 30 feet
 - iv. Pitcher’s Plate: 42 feet from rear point of the plate
 - v. Outfield Arc: 10 feet behind baseline.
- B. In the event a team is short of players at game time, the game can begin with a minimum of 8 players. When the vacant and 9 & 10 spots in the batting order come up they will be recorded as outs until/if those players arrive. All late players will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- C. **Defense.**
 - i. Teams may have up to 14 players in the field on defense.



- ii. Teams shall have players in standard infield positions. The player in the pitching position may move back behind the pitching area, but must remain within the infield lines.
 - iii. Using a catcher is the coach's choice.
 - iv. Remaining players must be in the outfield. Outfields must stay behind the outfield arc until the ball is hit.
 - v. If a player(s) is out of position based on ii and iii above, the offensive team may choose to take the result of the play or redo the play.
 - vi. Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings.
Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.
 - vii. Two coaches may be in the outfield while their team is on defense.
- D. Offense.**
- i. All players shall be in the batting order.
 - ii. Teams with more players at a game may bat "player for player".
 - iii. 2 ¼ bats are used. 2 ¾ bats are not used in this league.
 - iv. **No stealing – Players who leave the base early shall be called "out"**
 - v. **A player may not be intentionally walked**
 - vi. **Each player is allowed up to 3 swings. An at-bat will end on the third swing, whether it be by swing and miss, foul ball or a fair ball put into play.**
- E. A team may score a maximum of 7 runs per inning (including the last inning) or record 3 outs for the side to be retired.
- F. Umpires will call "time" when the defensive team possesses the ball in the infield and the lead runner has stopped advancing. The defense must stop the base runner. The umpire will call "time" and check the trailing base runners. If trailing base runners have reached the halfway hash they can advance to the base he/she was going to. If the trailing player does not reach the halfway hash, he/she will return to the previous base.
- G. All other rules are as outlined in the USSSA Rulebook.

2. 8U Coach Pitch Baseball

- A. Field Dimensions.**
- i. Bases: 60 feet
 - ii. Foul Ball Arc: 20 feet
 - iii. Safety Arc: 30 feet
 - iv. Pitcher's Plate: 42 feet from rear point of the plate.
 - v. Outfield Arc: 10' behind baseline.
- B. Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players.** In the event a team is short of players at game time, the game can begin with a minimum of 8 players. When the vacant and 9 & 10 spots in the batting order come up they will be recorded as outs until/if those players arrive. All late players will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- C. Defense.**
- i. 10 defensive players will play in the field with 4 players in the outfield.
 - ii. No outfielder may assume an infield position. All outfielders must be in the outfield when the ball is batted.
 - iii. If a player(s) is out of position based on ii above, the offensive team may take the result of the play or bat that pitch over.
 - iv. No defensive coaches allowed on the playing field, two coaches may coach from foul territory no more than one on each foul line. Interference with the flow of the game and/or any unsportsmanlike conduct will result in the coach being ejected from the game.
 - v. Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings.
Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.
- D. Offense.**
- i. The batting order shall consist of all present players.



- ii. Teams with more players present may bat player for player. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster and present shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
 - iii. No stealing – players who leave the base early shall be called “out”
 - iv. A player may not be intentionally walked.
 - v. An “at bat” ends when a 3rd strike is called, a fair ball is hit, or a maximum of 6 pitches are thrown.
- E. **Pitching Rules.**
- i. There will be 5’ x 5’ D-box with the front edge set at 42 feet from the rear point of home plate.
 - ii. A pitcher’s line will be drawn through the D-box to the fair ball arc. The coach will pitch with one foot on or straddle the pitcher’s line. The coach may move in or back as needed. Pitching coach may instruct the batter, but must move to foul territory immediately to coach base runners.
 - iii. The player in the pitching position may move back behind the pitching area, but must remain within the infield lines.
- F. Each at bat ends on 3 outs or 7 runs scored.
- G. Umpires will call “time” when the defensive team possesses the ball in the infield and the lead runner has stopped advancing. The defense must stop the base runner. The umpire will call “time” and check the trailing base runners. If trailing base runners have reached the halfway hash they can advance to the base he/she was going to. If the trailing player does not reach the halfway hash, he/she will return to the previous base.
- H. All other rules are as outlined in the USSSA Rulebook.

3. 10U Baseball

- A. **Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players.** Teams may start a game with 8 players. The 9th position in the batting order will be declared an out each team at bat until the 9th rostered player arrives.
- B. **Defense.**
- i. Up to 9 defensive players may play in the field.
 - ii. Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings. **Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.**
 - iii. A player removed from the pitching position, but not from the game, may return to the pitching position after one batter or that player’s sub has completed their turn at bat within the rules of pitching limitations.
- C. **Offense.**
- i. The batting order shall consist of all players on the roster at the beginning of the game.
 - ii. Players arriving late shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 - iii. All batters on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
 - iv. Teams with more players present may bat player for player.
 - v. The base runner can not lead off any base.
 - vi. A base runner may leave the base when the pitch reaches home plate.
 - vii. If a base runner leaves early, the umpire shall call time and the runner will be ruled out.
 - viii. The batter may not advance on a dropped third strike.
- D. Each at bat ends on 3 outs or 7 runs scored.
- E. **Pitching Regulations**

USSSA Rule 8.05.C 1-4

Max to Pitch next day	One Day Max	Three Day Max
3 Innings	6 Innings	8 Innings
A player who pitches in excess of above, must rest the next day.		

- i. **A player who pitches three (3) consecutive days must rest the 4th day.**
- F. All other rules are as outlined in the USSSA Rulebook.

4. 12U Baseball

- A. **Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players.** Teams may start a game with 8 players. The 9th position in the batting order will be declared an out each team at bat until the 9th rostered player arrives.
- B. **Defense.**
- Up to 9 defensive players may play in the field.
 - Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings. **Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.**
 - A player removed from the pitching position, but not from the game, may return to the pitching position after one batter or that player's sub has completed their turn at bat within the rules of pitching limitations.
- C. **Offense.**
- The batting order shall consist of all players on the roster and present at the beginning of the game.
 - Players arriving late shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 - All batters on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
 - Teams with more players present may bat player for player.
- D. Each at bat ends on 3 outs or 7 runs scored.
- E. **Pitching Regulations**

USSSA Rule 8.05.C 1-4

Max to Pitch next day	One Day Max	Three Day Max
3 Innings	6 Innings	8 Innings
A player who pitches in excess of above, must rest the next day.		

- A player who pitches three (3) consecutive days must rest the 4th day.**
- F. All other rules are as outlined in the USSSA Rulebook.

5. 14U Baseball

- A. **Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players.** Teams may start a game with 8 players. The 9th position in the batting order will be declared an out each team at bat until the 9th rostered player arrives.
- B. **Defense.**
- Up to 9 defensive players may play in the field.
- C. **Offense.**
- The batting order shall consist of all players on the roster and present at the beginning of the game.
 - Players arriving late shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 - All batters on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
 - Teams with more players present may bat player for player.
- D. A player removed from the pitching position, but not from the game, may return to the pitching position within the rules of pitching limitations.
- E. All players on roster must play at least 1 inning. This includes offense and defense.
- F. Substitution rules to accomplish the playing time rule will be as follows:
- Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered once, provided the players occupy their same batting position in the batting order.
 - The starting player and their substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
 - If a player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting or substitute position, this is considered an illegal re-entry. The illegal player shall be disqualified.



G. Pitching Limitations

USSSA Rule 8.05.C 1-4

Max to Pitch Next Day	One Day Max	Three Day Max
3	7	8
A player who pitches in excess of above, must rest the next day.		

i. A player who pitches three (3) consecutive days must rest the 4th day.

H. All other rules are as outlined in the USSSA Rulebook.

Girls 8U Softball

A. Field Dimensions.

- i. Bases: 60 feet
- ii. Foul Ball Arc: 20 feet
- iii. Safety Arc: 30 feet
- iv. Pitcher's Plate: 35 feet from rear point of the plate.
- v. Outfield Arc: 10' behind baseline.

B. Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players. In the event a team is short of players at game time, the game can begin with a minimum of 8 players. When the vacant and 9 & 10 spots in the batting order come up they will be recorded as outs until/if those players arrive. All late players will be added to the bottom of the batting order.

C. Defense.

- i. 10 defensive players will play in the field with 4 players in the outfield.
- ii. No outfielder may assume an infield position. All outfielders must be in the outfield when the ball is batted.
- iii. If a player(s) is out of position based on ii above, the offensive team may take the result of the play or bat that pitch over.
- iv. Two coaches may coach on the field behind the defensive players. Interference with the flow of the game and/or any unsportsmanlike conduct will result in the coach being ejected from the game.
- v. Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings. **Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.**

D. Offense.

- i. The batting order shall consist of all present players.
- ii. Teams with more players present may bat player for player. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster and present shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- iii. **Players must wear batting helmet with chin strap and mask**
- iv. No stealing.
- v. **An "at bat" ends when a 3rd strike is called, a fair ball is hit, or a maximum of 5 pitches are thrown.**

E. Pitching Rules.

- i. There will be a 16 foot circle around the pitcher's plate
- ii. The coach pitching may instruct the batter, but must move to foul territory immediately to coach base runners.
- iii. **The player in the pitching position may move back behind the pitching area, but must remain within the infield lines.**

F. Each at bat ends on 3 outs or 5 runs scored.

G. Umpires will call "time" when the defensive team possesses the ball in the infield and the lead runner has stopped advancing. The defense must stop the base runner. The umpire will call "time" and check the trailing base runners. If trailing base runners have reached the halfway hash they can advance to the base he/she was going to. If the trailing player does not reach the halfway hash, he/she will return to the previous base.



Girls 10U, 12U, & 14U Softball

- A. **Required Players for Game & Late Arriving Players.** Teams may start a game with 8 players. The 9th position in the batting order will be declared an out each time at bat until the 9th rostered player arrives.
- B. **Defense.**
- i. Up to 9 defensive players may play in the field.
 - ii. Pitching distances:
 1. 10U & 12U – 40 feet
 2. 14U – 43 feet
 - iii. Coaches are encouraged not to sit any player out in 2 consecutive defensive innings.
Any error by a team regarding playing time shall be corrected immediately once noticed.
 - iv. A player removed from the pitching position, but not from the game, may return to the pitching position after one batter or that player’s sub has completed their turn at bat.
- C. **Offense.**
- i. The batting order shall consist of all players on the roster at the beginning of the game.
 - ii. Players arriving late shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
 - iii. All batters on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
 - iv. Teams with more players present may bat player for player.
 - v. The base runner can not lead off any base.
 - vi. A base runner may leave the base when the pitch leaves the pitcher’s hand.
 - vii. If a base runner leaves early, the umpire shall call “time” and the runner will be ruled out.
 - viii. The batter may advance on a dropped third strike if 1st base is unoccupied.
 - ix. **Teams shall use a pinch runner for the catcher and one other player each inning.**
 - x. A player removed from the pitching position, but not from the game, may return to the pitching position after one batter or that player’s sub has completed their at bat.
- D. Each at bat ends on 3 outs or 5 runs scored.

X. CITY TOURNAMENT

- A. **Team Selection.** Each Commission may select All Star teams or teams from their league with or without pick ups from other teams to the City Tournament.
- B. **Player Selection.** A player may only play on one team in the City Tournament. A player must have played in a minimum of 6 KPRD Regular Season League games to be eligible to participate in the City Tournament. **A player may play up an age division if needed, however, not in 6U Tball since no younger age group is sanctioned by the City.**
- C. **Coach Selection.** Each Commission shall select coaches for teams in the City Tournament
- D. **Coach Eligibility.** All coaches selected by the Commission must be in good standing with the KPRD Athletics office which includes having completed and passing a national background check and completed Concussion Policy requirements.
- E. Commissions may send teams to the City Tournament based on the total number of teams during the regular season. Number of teams may be increased based on interest.

Regular Season Teams	City Tournament Teams
1 Team	1 Team
2 – 6 Teams	2 Teams
7 -9 Teams	3 Teams
10+ Teams	4 Teams

- F. Commissions that have only one team may pick up as many as 3 players from the teams in the league they played in during the KPRD regular season. Only players not chosen for their host commission teams are available.
- G. **Tournament Site Selection.** The KPRD Athletics Office will determine City Tournament sites.
- H. **Tournament Draw & Format.** Teams will be drawn randomly by the coaches at the coach meeting and compete in a double-elimination tournament.



- I. **Tournament Awards.** The Champion and Finalist in each division will receive awards. Awards will be given to all players on the team roster and 1 coach.
- J. **Tournament Documentation.**
 - i. The City Tournament team coach or Commission shall turn in the team roster at the City Tournament Coach Meeting.
 - ii. The coach shall have a birth certificate and recent photograph of all players on the roster with him/her during all tournament games in case of a protest regarding a player's age or identity.
 - iii. Coach must have successfully completed a national background check
 - iv. Coach must have successfully completed the coach requirements of the Youth Sports Concussion Policy
- K. **Protests.**
 - i. A protest must occur while the player in question is in the game (batting, on base, or in the field).
 - ii. The coach must stop the game, approach the umpire, and file a protest.
 - iii. The coach must pay a \$100 cash protest fee to the Field Supervisor and state the name of the player and reason for the protest.
 - iv. The Field Supervisor will first determine if the reason for the protest is allowed.
 - v. The protest fee will be refunded to the coach if the protest is correct.
 - vi. If the protest is upheld, the team with the ineligible player will be forfeited.
 - vii. If the result of the protest can not be determined during the game, the game will be completed. The result of the game will be on hold until a ruling is made.
 - viii. The team may continue in the consolation draw of the tournament without the ineligible player.
 - ix. Possible protests
 1. Age – player is too old (or too young for Tball)
 2. Identity – player is not person listed on roster
 3. Number of Games Played – player did not play in at least 6 regular season games
 4. Player played games in another City commission or played on more than one team (includes playing 6U and 8U)

PARK RULES: The Knoxville Parks and Recreation Department has the following rules for Parks used for youth games that are expected to be followed by all users of the facility. **VIOLATORS OF THESE RULES WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES.**

PARK RULES

- No alcoholic beverage (This includes the parking lots)
- No pets
- No knives or explosives; firearms are legal only with a carry permit
- No profanity or loud threatening language
- No hitting into the fences
- All warm ups must be done in the designated area(s)
- In case of lightning, the fields will be cleared and everyone will asked to go to their cars. Play will not resume until there has been a 30 minute interval since the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder.