Taylorsville Fast-Pitch Softball League

Playing Rules

Fall Softball Season 2023

<https://www.usssa.com/fastpitch/fastpitch-rules-legal-information>

1. **Team Practice**
	1. Team practice of any kind may not start before the date set forth by the board.
	2. Practices held once per day will be no more than three (3) hours in duration, weather permitting. Practices held twice per day will be no more than two (2) hours in duration.
	3. There must be a mixture of male and female adults at all practice sessions.
	4. Any Team that wishes to practice or play games outside of TFSL must have approval from the president.
	5. TFSL teams that practice with teams that are not TFSL are covered by TFSL league insurance but non-TFSL teams are not and must be covered by their own insurance.
2. **SEASON GAMES**
	1. TFSL is expected to schedule all teams to play a minimum of 8 games per season for all age groups.
		1. All games will be 60 minutes, with no new inning after 55 minutes for 8U and 10U
		2. All games will be 70 minutes, with no new inning after 65 minutes for 12U, 14U, 16/18U and 19+
	2. Games should be played as scheduled. Rescheduling procedures will be decided by the board and must include proper notification to all concerned including umpires.
	3. A game that is rained out will be considered complete if 45 minutes of the game time has lapsed and the home team is either ahead or has completed the bottom half of the inning.
		1. An incomplete game will be replayed from the beginning at a later date rather than being completed later.
	4. **Mercy Rule**
		1. All Age Groups: Each side will retire after 5 runs or 3 outs, whichever comes first.
	5. 8U, 10U, and 12U games can end in a tie. 14U,16/18U, and 19+ games will play one international tiebreaker (ITB), which will have a maximum of 3 runs scored per side. If still tied, the game will end in a tie.
	6. Make-up games should be scheduled as soon as possible. At the end of the season, make-up games that do not affect the first-place standings do not have to be played.
	7. Playing Field Distances PITCHING PLATE BASELINE
		1. 8U 35 feet 60 feet
		2. 10U 35 feet 60 feet
		3. 12U 40 feet 60 feet
		4. 14U, 16/18U, 19+ 43 feet 60 feet
3. **PLAYING RULES**
	1. TFSL games will be played under the rules of the sanctioning organization except as modified, conflicting, or changed as follows:
	2. **TFSL Softball Size**: Age groups 8U and 10U will use an 11-inch ball. All other age groups will use a 12-inch ball.
	3. The board of directors may establish a time limit on regular games.
	4. The home team will be designated on the schedule.
	5. During the season, each girl must play defensively every other inning in all league games she attends. This does not carry over from game to game. After the first violation of this rule, and the coach has been notified and so noted on the official scorecard, the team will forfeit the next game if this rule is violated.
		1. **Exception:** Any girl who fails to attend practices or games may be disciplined by limiting her participation in a game(s) only after the situation and proposed discipline has been discussed with and approved by the president and/or board.
	6. Each girl on the roster will bat in order throughout the entire game.
	7. If a player shows up late to a game she will be added to the bottom of the lineup. Teams that do not have at least 10 players at the start of a game will not be penalized in any age group. Instead try to arrange for pick-up players from other teams in the league, to fill in for your missing players. Pick-up players are required to bat at the bottom of the lineup and are only allowed to play outfield. No automatic outs will be given for playing with less than 10 players.
	8. The umpire will declare a forfeit when the batting order is not submitted properly, to the other coach, but only after requesting and still not receiving it.
	9. A player who becomes injured and requires medical treatment or hospital care under a doctor's orders must supply the appropriate Vice-President a medical release to return as an active player.
	10. A manager may not log a visit to the pitcher as a result of an injury or a timeout being called by the other team. Delivering water for hydration is permitted.
	11. TFSL league games are free-player substitutions and don’t use the re-entry rule.
	12. Metal cleats or spikes are only allowed by players 14U and older.
	13. All girls must wear a batting helmet with a NOCSAE-approved face guard when batting during practice, league play, and tournament play. Helmets are provided by the TFSL league.
	14. All girls catching any pitched ball (wiffle, tennis, softball, etc) must be wearing a catcher’s mask (practice or games).
	15. All girls pitching it is highly recommended they wear a face mask
	16. All umpires must wear a mask when umpiring a TFSL game if they are behind the plate.
	17. Roving outfielders shall be allowed in all classifications, (all outfielders and the rover must play at least five feet behind the baseline until after the pitch is delivered).
4. **PITCHING**
	1. During the regular season,
		1. 8U Coach Pitch/Coach Assist/ Tee for 5 and 6 yr olds
		2. 10U, 12U, 14U, 16/18U,19+ - 2 pitchers every game for at least 1 inning. An inning will consist of 3 consecutive outs by a pitched ball. To include double plays or reaching the run limit per inning
		3. **Other ways to qualify**:
* If they are removed from the game due to injury and cannot return in any capacity (If they do return, they have to return to pitching).
* If 3 batters are hit in 1 inning, and the pitcher is removed from pitching the remainder of the game
	+ 1. If these rules are not followed, the game will still be played but will be recorded as a forfeit.
		2. Definition of coach pitch. The team at bat will have their coach or an adult assigned by their coach pitch to them when it's their turn to bat. The adult pitcher must stay in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times during the pitch. Each batter will have five pitches or three strikes to hit the ball before being called out on strikes. If the batter hits a foul ball on their fifth pitch or third strike they will receive another pitch, no one can be called out on a foul ball. If a girl is hit by a coach-pitched ball the batter will not be awarded first base.
		3. If, in the same inning, a pitcher records a batter being hit-by-pitch for the third time, the player will be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that game. The player may play positions other than pitcher during the remainder of the game.
		4. Protests must be made before the next pitch or, on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field. The manager or coach of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper. The intent for this protest must also be noted on the official score sheet at this time including the status of where each runner is if runners are on base. Once a protest is registered the game will continue at that time until it finishes. If the protest is upheld the game will then be replayed from the time of the protest forward. An official written protest must be filed within a reasonable time with the league president
1. **RULES FOR 8U:**
	1. The offensive and defensive teams will trade positions upon three outs by the defensive team or five runs by the offensive team.
	2. All players will play defense each inning. Six players will be in the infield, placed in standard infield positions, the remaining players will play outfield (grass). The infield is defined as the area on the diamond inside the baselines. For safety reasons, all players MUST start positioned behind the 35-foot arch line until after the batter has hit the ball. The outfield arch for defensive player placement purposes will be on the grass part of the diamond. The umpire's judgment will be used regarding whether the ball is in the infield or outfield for base running and time-out situations.
	3. A coach will pitch the ball (underhand) to their team. The pitcher/coach must remain in contact with the pitching rubber while pitching.
	4. If the pitcher/coach intentionally interferes with a batted ball or a play, the batter-runner will be called out and all runners will return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If this happens again the coach must leave the field. If the ball hits the pitcher/coach while they are getting out of the way, the ball is live and playable.
	5. The pitcher/coach or base coach may not physically help the runners to stop or go. Runners who are contacted in this manner will be called out.
	6. A batter will receive five pitches. Five un-hit pitches or three strikes will constitute an out. A foul ball on the third strike or fifth pitch will not be considered an out. If the batter, after fouling off pitches, lets a pitch go by, then the batter will be out.
	7. There is no dropped third-strike rule.
	8. Walks are not allowed.
	9. Batters may advance one base on a ball hit in fair territory in the infield. That batter and any additional base runners may advance one additional base on any defensive play (such as a throw or running to protect a base) or misplayed ball at the runner’s own risk. After the first defensive play and subsequent advance, runners may not advance further until the next hit ball even if another defensive play or misplayed ball is made. A two-base advance will be the maximum bases allowed on a ball that stops or is stopped in the infield, overthrow or not.
	10. Runners may advance to home base on only plays resulting from a hit ball. For example, if a runner is on 2nd base and is hit to 3rd base and then the ball is overthrown or misplayed, the runner may not advance home.
	11. Players may advance more than one base at their own risk on any ball batted into the outfield until the ball has been thrown to the infield. The infield is designated as the baseline between bases. The ball then becomes a dead ball and the runner or runners are stopped at the base they are going to. Players who must return to a specific base will do so after time is given. If a play is made on a runner after the ball has been returned to the infield and the ball was misplayed, the runner is allowed one base from 1st to 2nd or from 2nd to 3rd. If there is a runner on 3rd who is not allowed to advance home, then the runners may not advance past 3rd base. Only one overthrow/misplayed ball per batted ball is allowed.
	12. Stealing is not allowed. Runners may not advance on a wild pitch, passed ball, or throwback to the pitcher.
	13. The infield fly rule will be eliminated
	14. Games can end in a tie. Each team will be awarded a win on the stat sheets.
	15. Each side will retire after 5 runs or three outs, whichever comes first.
	16. No infield fly rule.
	17. An approved baseball, tee ball, or official softball bat can be used for batting.
	18. Regular season games will be 60 minutes.
	19. Each team is allowed two coaches on the field when on defense, to help teach the girls defensively, but cannot interfere with the ball or runners.
	20. 5- and 6-year-old players can hit from a tee.
2. **MODIFIED RULES FOR 10 & UNDER**
	1. Coach Pitch is at the beginning of the season through September 10. This will allow for the development of talent. Then they will switch to player pitch for the remainder of the season. Girls will pitch up to 3 pitches and then coaches will pitch up to 3 pitches. Girls will not be allowed to steal home in coach-pitch games. Exceptions to the mix of games will be made on a case-by-case basis.
	2. Stealing is allowed while a player is pitching not a coach.
		1. The ball must cross the plate before the runner can steal.
		2. On the chance of an errant throw, the runner may not advance to the next base.
			1. The exception is on the initial play, if there is an errant throw to 1st base on the initial play the runner may then advance 1 base.
		3. Stealing home is not allowed; runners must be hit in from 3rd base. Players can advance at their own risk if the ball is hit into the outfield. Players must stop at the next base after the ball crosses the infield baseline.
		4. It is up to the umpire's discretion to return players to a base if the umpire determines that is where the runner should stay.
	3. Each side will retire after 5 runs or three outs, whichever comes first.
	4. No infield fly rule.
	5. The game can end in a tie.
	6. An approved official fastpitch softball bat can be used for batting.
3. **OFFICIAL TAYLORSVILLE FAST-PITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE UNIFORM**
	1. The official TFSL uniform will be a shirt with the organization's name on the chest or left shoulder. The shirt is to be purchased by the league and given to each player. Girls are to wear the TFSL shirt while playing regularly scheduled TFSL games; however, if she forgets her shirt she will still be allowed to play.
	2. Hats are optional.
	3. Shoes must be canvas or leather with rubber, leather, or plastic soles. Cleats are not required. If cleats are worn, metal or sharp cleats are only allowed for players 14U and older.
	4. Each player is required to furnish their own mitt.
4. **CHAMPIONSHIP & AWARDS**
	1. The team with the highest number of points (see 10.3) for regularly scheduled league games in each classification, except 8U divisions, shall be declared the first-place champions of that age group.
	2. If league play ends in a tie for first place, a tie will go head to head for a win/loss record and then Runs Against. A playoff game(s) is authorized at the discretion of the board.
	3. Awards will be selected and made at the discretion of the board. Awards may include first, second place, and third place, MVP, most inspirational, etc. 8u will receive participation awards.
5. **MANAGERS, COACHES, AND GAME OFFICIALS**
	1. **MANAGERS**
		1. The vice president for each age division shall appoint one manager for each team and such assistant coaches as appropriate. These personnel should be of unquestionable character with a profound interest in and knowledge of girls and softball.
		2. All adult volunteers will at all times set a good example by their behavior for the girls in their charge. They should:

a. Refrain from smoking in front of the girls during games or practice time.

b. Refrain from profane or abusive language in the presence of the girls.

c. Not criticize players in front of spectators, but reserve constructive criticism for a private conversation.

d. Accept decisions of judgment calls by officials on the field as being fair and called to the best ability of the officials. Challenges and appeals of rules should be handled with respect and calm. Never use an abusive tone with officials.

e. Avoid criticizing the opposing team, its manager, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or gesture.

f. Not permit tactics that are injurious to the health of the girls.

g. Not permit a girl to play after she is badly bruised or injured.

h. Abide by the family doctor's decision in all matters of the player's health and injuries.

j. Strive to make every TFSL activity serve as a training ground for life.

* + 1. Managers may select their coach(s) to assist. Coaches can be male or female. If an all-male coaching staff is selected, this team must have a female chaperon. Selections are subject to board approval.
		2. Any manager, coach, or assistant coach that is removed from a game by an umpire for any reason will be suspended until that person could come before a board of review to determine if that person is suitable to be a manager/coach. The board or umpire at that time can impose a penalty it determines suitable including suspension or removal. If this happens a second time, that person will be removed from the team. At a minimum, the president and one additional board member should conduct this review.
	1. **CHAPERON**
		1. Each team shall always have one adult male and one adult female at all TFSL functions.
	2. **GAME OFFICIALS**
		1. All game officials should be registered officials with a competent knowledge of TFSL rules.
		2. It is the responsibility of the president to arrange for qualified umpires for each game and provide each with a copy of the TFSL rules and regulations. A qualified individual will be assigned as the official scorekeeper.
		3. Young adults who are at least sixteen years old may be permitted to umpire 8U, 10U, & 12U games; qualified 14U players can umpire 8U & 10U games.
		4. Game officials may declare the game forfeited by any team not ready to play 10 minutes after the official game starting time.
		5. Umpires are responsible for the control of field decorum and are NOT obligated to take action on problems that are not on the playing field or concerning other than members of the two teams playing a game in which they are officiating.
1. **EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS**
	1. TFSL is responsible for a satisfactory game ball being available at each regularly scheduled game.
		1. An equipment manager is to be appointed to maintain the league's equipment to the highest possible standard for safety.
		2. All teams must be equipped with high-quality safety-first equipment to be used during practice sessions as well as regular games.
		3. All coaches need to maintain equipment throughout the season.
		4. All coaches need to turn in TFSL equipment at the turn-in date provided. Failure to do so can result in collections.
	2. The following items are mandatory and will be furnished by the league.

a. Helmets with face guards

b. Bats

c. Bases for official game play only (unless furnished by field crew)

d. Catcher's equipment (helmet, chest protector, shin guards)

1. **STANDARDS OF THE GAME**
	1. Seating areas shall be provided for each playing team; girls not in the field must be in their area. The area should be reserved for girls of the participating teams and their staff. This area will be called the dugout.
		1. Spectators should be separated from the dugout by at least 10 feet. If possible arrange for spectators to be seated behind the backstop.
		2. Spectators are expected to conduct themselves per the aims and goals of TFSL. The removal of offensive persons from a TFSL game for poor attitude and/or behavior is the responsibility of the coach and/or a board member, not the umpire.
		3. Use of alcohol, tobacco, or profanity on or around the playing field during TFSL play or activities is forbidden.
		4. Admission fees will not be charged at regularly scheduled league games.
		5. No business of questionable adolescent benefit can have their name, emblem, or slogan appear as part of a league's program as advertisers, promoters, or sponsors.
		6. The board & coaches should try and impress upon the parents the need for their positive support on all games. This is a very important part of the TFSL program and is a good time to have our girls and parents experience good sportsmanship.
		7. A code of conduct will be implemented and all participants are required to read and acknowledge acceptance of the code. A violation of provisions of the code of conduct can result in the removal of a person or persons from TFSL functions.
		8. **Suspensions:** Any individual not abiding by the rules and bylaws of TFSL may be suspended by the president subject to the review of the board of directors. Suspensions will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
			1. Any person or group suspended may not use the emblem or name of the organization nor may they use the rules, regulations, bylaws, equipment, or other property belonging to TFSL.