



2024 Official Fastpitch Rules and Bylaws

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UACS Sports Fastpitch Softball

Contents

Introduction..... 3

Rule 1.0 The Softball Season and Team Membership..... 3

Rule 2.0 Team Classifications 3

Rule 3.0 Age Eligibility..... 4

Rule 4.0 Rosters..... 4

Rule 5.0 UACS Sports Point Structure and Tournament Qualifications 5

Rule 6.0 Field Dimensions 6

Rule 7.0 Equipment, Bats, and Uniforms 6

Rule 8.0 Rules of Play..... 7

Rule 9.0 Coach Pitch Specific Rules11

Rule 10.0 Sportsmanship and Rules of Conduct 13

Rule 12.0 Event Fees, Rainouts & Refunds, and Umpire Payments 13

Rule 12.0 Teams and Individual Awards..... 14

Introduction

This is the UACS Sports softball rulebook governing all UACS Sports Tournaments.

UACS Sports has the utmost respect for the game of softball, and it is our goal to promote a fair and competitive experience for coaches, players, families, and fans. UACS softball rules will be governed by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) softball rules unless specifically covered within. If any conflicts exist between the NFHS rules and the UACS rules, the UACS rules shall prevail. Rules interpretation will be at the discretion of the home plate umpire. An appeal to the Tournament Director may be made by the head coach. All decisions made by the Tournament Director are final. See rule 7.10 regarding appeals. Judgement calls are not appealable to the Tournament Director.

Rule 1.0 The Softball Season and Team Membership

- 1.1 **The Softball Season:** The softball season will begin on August 1st of each year and extend to July 31st of the following year.
- 1.2 **Team Membership:** Team Membership will be required once annually for each softball season as defined in 1.1. Teams will register their membership through www.uacssports.com. No team will be able to participate in any UACS events until the team is registered and membership paid. TEAM MEMBERSHIPS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.

Rule 2.0 Team Classifications

- 2.1 **Goal:** It is the goal of UACS Sports to create a fair and competitive environment for each team regardless of the team's current skill level. This should also be the goal of each coach and parent to promote the growth of their Up and Coming Star (UACS)! UACS reserves the right to move any team up or down in classification at any time throughout the season at its sole discretion. Part of UACS' mission is softball development. This cannot be achieved by chasing rings or sandbagging.
- 2.2 **8U-18U & High School:** UACS has the following divisions for fastpitch softball. 8U (A,B,C,Open), 10U (A,B,C,Open), 12U (A,B,C,Open), 14U (A,B,C,Open), 16U (A,B,C,Open), 18U(Open), High School (Open).
- 2.3 **New Teams:** New teams that have not participated in any sanctioned UACS event are subject to reclassification by UACS based on record and sanctioning in other organizations and events keeping the goals of section 2.1 in mind.

Rule 3.0 Age Eligibility

- 3.1 Age Eligibility:** The age group shall be determined by the players age as of December 31st of the sanctioned year. Example, for the 2023 season (Aug 1, 2022 – July 31, 2023) if a player turns 14 on December 31st, 2022 then they would play in the 14U age group for the 2022 season.
- 3.2 Eligibility Verification and age protests:** Each player participating in an UACS sanctioned event must be able produce a birth certificate to prove eligibility. Player protests can be made at any time. The protesting coach must protest to the Tournament Director only. Player eligibility protests will require a fee of \$200. This fee will be refunded if a player is found to be ineligible.
- 3.3 Eligibility Violations:** If a team is found to have an ineligible player participating in a sanctioned UACS event, the player will be immediately ejected from the tournament and the team will forfeit any game, including all UACS points, that the player participated in, regardless of being in the lineup or as a substitute. If the discovery is made during pool play, the team will be allowed to continue after forfeiture of games as stated above. If the discovery is made during bracket play, the team will forfeit any current and future games for the event and be out of the tournament. For eligibility violations, the Tournament Director reserves the right to remove the team from the tournament at any time (pool or bracket play) at his/her sole discretion. Eligibility violations may also result in a team and/or coach no longer being allowed to participate in UACS events. No refunds will be given for team membership or tournament registrations for eligibility violations.

Rule 4.0 Rosters

- 4.1 Online Rosters:** All rosters must be online and complete prior to the start of any UACS event. All players on the roster must meet eligibility rules in section 3.0. All email addresses for player's parents must be unique. Coach's emails are not allowed to be entered for a parent (unless the coach is also a parent of one of the players).
- 4.2 Player's Name:** It is required that the players name be listed on the roster EXACTLY as it appears on the birth certificate.
- 4.3 Waivers: All waivers must be agreed to by all participants.**
- 4.4 Multiple Teams:** A player may be listed on multiple team rosters. However, a player is only allowed to participate on one team per UACS tournament.
- 4.5 "A-Class" Players** are not permitted to play on a "B-Class" or "C-Class" roster. If there is any question about this, the tournament director should be consulted.

- 4.6 Roster Freeze:** Rosters are frozen prior to the team's first game of an event. Rosters are unfrozen the day after an event finishes. If there is a technical issue with your online roster, please contact the tournament director to resolve prior to your first game.
- 4.7 Roster Exceptions:** It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure all players on the roster are eligible and meets the rules established herein prior to their first game. UACS Sports has final discretion and approval of a team's roster. If there is a conflict between the eligibility rules and the Tournament Directors decision, the Tournament Director's decision will prevail.
- 4.8 Roster Violations:** All players must be listed on the roster. If a player participates that is not on the roster or a team is found to have an ineligible player on the roster and participating in a sanctioned UACS event, the player may be ejected from the tournament and the team may forfeit any game, including all UACS points, that the player participated in, regardless of being in the lineup or as a substitute. If the discovery is made during pool play, the team will be allowed to continue after forfeiture of games as stated above. If the discovery is made during bracket play, the team will forfeit any current and future games for the event and be out of the tournament. For eligibility violations, the Tournament Director reserves the right to remove the team from the tournament at any time (pool or bracket play) at his/her sole discretion. Roster violations may result in forfeiture of all present and past UACS points and/or team/coach no longer being allowed to participate in UACS events. No refunds will be given for team membership or tournament registrations for roster violations.

Rule 5.0 UACS Sports Point Structure and Tournament Qualifications

- 5.1 Point Structure:** The following point structure will be used for ranking UACS Teams throughout the softball season (See rule 1.1 that defines a softball season). The first World Series pool play game will be determined by team rankings.

Tournament Type	Win	Tie	Loss
<i>Qualifier</i>	20	10	5
<i>Double-Points Qualifier</i>	40	20	10
<i>Triple-Points Qualifier</i>	60	30	15
<i>State</i>	75	50	25
<i>Super NIT</i>	75	50	25
<i>Summer Games</i>	100	75	50
<i>World Series</i>	125	100	75

- 5.2 Tournament Qualifications:** A team may register and participate in any Qualifying, Super NIT, or Summer Games tournaments.

State Tournaments: To participate in a UACS Sports State Tournament, a team must play in at least 2 UACS tournaments. (UACS Qualifying tournaments, Summer Games Tournaments, or Super NIT Tournament).

World Series Tournaments: To participate in a UACS Sports World Series Tournament, a team must play in at least 1 UACS Sports State Tournaments.

UACS Sports reserves the right to adjust these requirements or make certain exceptions at its own discretion.

Rule 6.0 Field Dimensions

6.1 Field Dimensions

Division	Pitching Distance	Base Paths
8U	35'	60'
10U	35''	60'
12U	40'	60'
14U	43'	60'
16U	43'	60'
18U	43'	60'
High School	43'	60'

6.2 Pitching Circle: There shall be a 16' diameter pitching circle around the pitching rubber.

Rule 7.0 Equipment, Bats, and Uniforms

- 7.1** All players must be properly equipped. It is the Head Coach's responsibility to ensure all players are properly equipped to maintain safety for all participants.
- 7.2 Shoes and Socks:** Shoes and socks must be worn, and plastic cleats are recommended. Metal cleats are allowed for 14U, 16U, 18U, and High School, unless the field is turf. In this case, plastic cleats are required.
- 7.3 Catcher:** Catcher's must have the following properly fitting equipment to play the position. A hockey style catcher's helmet, chest protector, shin guards, protective cup, and catcher's mitt are required without exception.
- 7.4 Batter:** Batters must have a properly fitting unaltered helmet in original condition.
- 7.5 Bats:** All bats must be unaltered official softball bats. The umpire will check all bats prior to the game. Any illegal bats will be removed from the dugout prior to the game. National High School Federation maintains a list of illegal bats and UACS will enforce this. Use of illegal bat will result in an automatic out for the player using the bat and the coach restricted to the dugout for the remainder of

that game. If it happens the second time the Coach will be ejected from the game.

- 7.6 Softballs:** Teams must supply their own softballs. All 12-Under through 18-Over division balls must be 12" in diameter with .47 C.O.R. and .375 compression. 8-Under and 10-Under must use 11" diameter with .47 C.O.R. and .375 compression.
- 7.7 Uniforms:** Players must wear the same or close to the same uniforms. Uniforms must have a visible unique number. Hats and/or visors of similar style and colors must be worn by all fielders excluding the catcher (*of course*).
- 7.8 Jewelry:** All jewelry is prohibited except for medical alert bracelets which must be worn on the glove hand.
- 7.9 Hair:** Hair bows, braided hair, and other types of hair decorations are allowed as long as they do not create a hazard to the player or other players.
- 7.10 Face Shields:** All 8U players are required to wear face shields. 10U infielders are required to wear face shields and 12U pitchers, 1st basemen, and 3rd basemen are required to wear face shields. 14U and older are not required to wear face shields. Face Shields must be clear and not smoked. Sunglasses can't be mirrored.

Rule 8.0 Rules of Play

- 8.1 Game Preliminaries:** Coaches must have teams ready to play 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. Minimal time will be given between games for players to warm up. Umpires will not wait. Head Coaches will meet at home plate prior to the start of each game. If a team is not ready to play after 10 minutes of the umpires being ready the game will be declared a forfeit. Unless the team is currently playing or moving from one field to the next.

Umpires will go over field conditions and verify all players are properly equipped. The home team will be determined by a coin flip for pool play games. The higher seed will be the home team for bracket games. Coaches are responsible for supplying two (2) softballs to the home plate umpire to start each game. Coaches are also responsible for paying the umpire fees at this time. Start times will be announced and play will begin. The home team shall provide an official scorekeeper (must be a paper book, game changer can't be used as an official book). Umpire cards must be completed with each team's lineup.

- 8.2 Tie Breakers:** Pool play games may end in a tie. Bracket play games will not end in a tie. If a bracket play game is tied and the end of the regulation, the international tie-breaker rule will go into effect. The inning will start with the last batted out being placed on 2nd base. If the last batted out is the pitcher or catcher

of record, the coach may place the second to last batted out on 2nd base if he chooses. The inning will start with zero (0) outs.

Tie Breakers for Seeding Purposes will be as follows (if based on pool play results):

1. Winning Percentage
2. Head-To-Head *
3. Total Runs Against
4. Total Run Differential
5. Total Runs For
6. Coin Flip

* If more than 2 teams tied in winning percentage then head-to-head is not used.

8.3 Innings and Time Limits:

Division	Innings	Time Limit	Run Rule (Mercy Rule)
8U	6	60 min pool play 70 min bracket play (finish the inning)	12 runs after 3 rd inning 10 runs after 4 th inning 8 runs after 5 th inning
10U-18U	7	60 min pool play 70 bracket play (finish the inning)	12 runs after 3 rd inning 10 runs after 4 th inning 8 runs after 5 th inning

**UACS reserves the right to shorten game times for rain shortened events to ensure teams are able to play as many games as possible.*

8.4 Intentional Delays: Intentionally delaying a game will not be tolerated by the offense or defense. The offensive 3rd base coach is allowed 1 timeout per inning. Catchers/Pitchers are allowed one meeting per inning.

8.5 Official Game: In the event of a shortened game for weather or other unforeseen factor, games will be considered complete after the 3rd inning. If the home team is batting and ahead, the home team is declared the winner and the current score is recorded. If the visitor team is batting, the winner will be the team ahead at the end of the last completed inning and the score from the last completed inning will be recorded. This rule is in affect regardless of pool play or bracket play. The visiting team is the team batting in the top half of the innings. The home team is the team batting in the bottom half of the innings.

8.6 Shortened Events: If an event or tournament is cancelled, the highest 2 seeds remaining will be declared Champions and Runner-Ups.

8.7 Batting Lineups:

- Teams must start with 9 defensive players.
- UACS has the option of “Extra Players (EP)”. Coaches may use nine regular players and up to three EPs. There would be 10, 11, or 12 total players on the lineup sheet. In this case, any nine can be used in the field with 10, 11, or 12

batters in the lineup. Three of the players would have EP in the position on the lineup. The coach can change the defensive players “free substitution” for the players in the lineup including the EPs.

- UACS also allows for the option of a DP/Flex player. If a coach uses a DP/Flex and only 9 batters, one of the 9 batters will be considered a DP. 8U may use a DP/Flex but must bat 10 players. If the DP/Flex is used, the flex player must remain on defense throughout the game, unless inserted into the batting lineup once for the DP, or replaced on defense, in which case, the Flex position will be eliminated for the remainder of the game.
- Substitute players shall be listed on the lineup sheet. They can be used at any time during the game. The original player (starter) can re-enter the game at any given time. The starter and the substitute may each re-enter once.
- A team may start a game with 8 players. The 9th batting position will be an automatic out. If the 9th player arrives, they may be added in the 9th batting position. Additional players arriving late will be considered substitutes.
- A team may not play with less than 8 players at any time including injuries or sickness. If the lineup card drops below 8 players, the game will be declared a forfeit and a 7-0 score will be recorded.

8.8 Injured or Sick Players: If a team has an injured player and batting the entire lineup, the player will be removed from the lineup without penalty and all remaining players will move up in the order. If the lineup drops to 8 players, the team will be required to take an out when it is the injured players at bat. The umpire will determine if the injury qualifies. An injured or sick player is not allowed to return to the game. However, they may play in the next game.

8.9 Courtesy Runner: Courtesy runners may be used for the pitcher of record or the catcher of record once the batter reaches 1st base. For the 8U divisions, courtesy runners are only allowed for the catcher only. Courtesy runners are not allowed after a pitch is thrown to the next batter. Substitutes must be used as courtesy runners unless the team is batting all players, in which case, the team has no substitutes and the last batted out must be used.

A starter that exited the game may be used as a courtesy runner as they are now considered a substitute. A substitute that entered and exited the game may also still be used as a courtesy runner.

A courtesy runner is not considered a pinch runner.

If a team only has one substitute that is on base, a team may use the last batted out. For a team batting all players, and the last batted out is on base, a team may use the second to last batted out.

In the case of an injury while the runner is on base, and no substitutes are available the last batted out may run for the injured player. If this player is a pitcher or catcher of record, the second to last batted out may run and so forth.

8.10 Pitching: The following rules are in affect for pitchers.

1. Pitchers may use the Step Back, Start Back, or Traditional (both feet on the rubber) approach.
2. Pitchers must do the following before pitching the ball:
 - a. Have possession of the ball in either the pitching or glove hand.
 - b. Have both hands separated as she steps onto the rubber.
 - c. Pitchers pitching foot must be in contact with the rubber.
 - d. Pitchers must take or simulate taking signs while on the rubber from the catcher only.
 - e. On the pitch delivery, the pivot foot may slide across the rubber.
 - f. If the start back style is used, the pitcher must step back before the pitch.
 - g. If the step back style is used, the pitcher must begin the step back motion as or before the hands are separated.
3. The pitch begins when the hands are no longer separated. The pitch can be aborted by the pitcher by stepping off the rubber by stepping backwards with her plant foot.
4. The delivery must start no less than one second and no more than 10 seconds after the hands are in contact with each other.
5. Pitcher's delivery:
 - a. Windmill or Slingshot style is acceptable.
 - b. Arm movement must be underhand.
 - c. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.
 - d. A Crow Hop is replanting the pivot foot and pushing off again. This is not allowed.
 - e. Leaping is illegal. Leaping is defined as an act by the pitcher which causes both feet to be airborne at the same time on the initial move from the rubber.
 - f. If the pitcher stops her wind up (unless the umpire calls time) without releasing the ball, an illegal pitch will be called resulting in a ball on the batter.

8.11 Intentional Walks: No pitches need to be thrown. The head coach only needs to inform the home plate umpire of his intentions to walk the batter. A batter can only be intentionally walked once in a game.

8.12 Headfirst Slides: Headfirst slides are allowed in all age divisions if the base runner does not have a face guard (c-flap) on their helmet. Otherwise, headfirst

slides are not allowed except for diving back to a base. A player wearing a face guard and sliding headfirst will be called out when the current play is over and removed from the bases. Any runs scored will count except for those runs scored by the offending player. Baserunners wearing face guards and sliding headfirst may only be called out once per play. However, if multiple players on the same play wearing a face guard slide headfirst, multiple outs can be called.

- 8.13 Bat Throwing or Slinging:** Umpires will give one warning for a thrown or “slung” bat once any player has done so. Additional thrown or “slung” bats will result in a dead ball and the player being called out and ejected from the game. Runners must return to the base occupied prior to the pitch.
- 8.14 Malicious Contact:** Baserunners and Defensive players should not engage in any malicious contact such as lowering a shoulder into another player. Players should attempt to avoid excessive contact when possible. This does not mean the player must slide at any base or home. It is the discretion of the umpire to determine if contact is deemed excessive and malicious. If so, the player may be called out or ejected from the game.
- 8.15 Slashing\Smashing:** Showing bunt and pulling back and hitting is NOT ALLOWED in any age group.
- 8.16 Appeals:** The Head Coach may appeal to a Tournament Director for rules interpretation only! Judgement calls MAY NOT be appealed to the Tournament Director. Games may only be protested for age eligibility and roster violations only. See sections 3.2 and 4.6.

Rule 9.0 Coach Pitch Specific Rules

- 9.1** 8 Runs or 3 outs per ½ inning.
- 9.2** There will be 10 defensive players allowed on the field. There must be no more than 6 infielders. The outfielders must play at least 10 feet beyond the bases. If a team has 10 defensive players, they must also bat 10. DP Flex rule can only be used if batting at least 10 and have the 11th player listed as a flex.
- 9.3** 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, 5th and consecutive fouls will not be counted against the 5-pitch count.
- 9.4** If the coach pitcher is hit by the ball it is a do over no pitch. The batter will return to the batter’s box and assume the count that was on them before the pitch.
- 9.5** The Pitcher-Player must remain in the pitching circle until the ball is pitched. The Pitcher-Player may not interfere with Coach-Pitcher.

- 9.6** The Coach-Pitcher may pitch at any distance inside the 16 foot pitching circle and within the boundaries of the 24 inch pitching rubber. To clarify, the Coach-Pitcher must be touching or be directly in front of the pitching rubber with both feet inside the pitching circle and use a straight-ahead pitching approach. Coach-Pitchers may not pitch from either side of the pitching rubber so as to gain the advantage of a directional hit. Penalty: If at any time prior to release of the ball, the Coach-Pitcher steps outside of the pitching circle or is outside the imaginary 24 inch pitching rubber boundaries, a strike will be called on the batter.
- 9.7** While the ball is in play, all runners are free to advance at their own risk. Play is stopped on defense by stopping the lead runner. Once the lead runner has been stopped, the ball is no longer in play. The ball is thrown to the pitcher's circle and no runner may advance.
- 9.8** Two coaches can stand in the outfield in foul ball area only 15 feet beyond the bases, one on each side of the field.
- 9.9** Runners may leave the base when the coach releases the pitch.
- 9.10** Unlimited number of players on the roster.
- 9.11** Teams can bat up to 13 players. Lineup may consist of 10 players with up to 3 EPs.
- 9.12** If the Coach Pitcher interferes with a defensive player trying to make a play on the ball, it will be considered a dead ball out and no runners can advance.
- 9.13** There will be no base stealing. Throwing behind a runner is allowed by the catcher. However, base runners are free to advance on the throw.
- 9.14** Bunting and slapping are allowed.
- 9.15** There will be no "Infield Fly Rule" or "Intentional Walk" for 8U Coach's Pitch.
- 9.16** A throw is considered as the ball being thrown overhand or underhanded to another player. Rolling the ball is not allowed and will not be considered a throw. If in the judgment of an umpire, the ball was rolled, the runner will be declared safe.
- 9.17** The catcher may not catch a foul ball unless they are in the catcher's box when the pitch is thrown and in the normal Catchers position. If the Catcher is not in the normal Catchers position, this will not be considered a caught foul ball. IF THE GIRL DECIDES TO PLACE HERSELF ANYWHERE OTHER THAN THE CATCHER'S BOX AND CATCH A FOUL, IT IS CONSIDERED A NON-CAUGHT FOUL BALL.

9.18 All players must wear a face shield.

Rule 10.0 Sportsmanship and Rules of Conduct

- 10.1** Coaches and players are expected to practice sportsmanship and conduct themselves appropriately on and off the field. Sportsmanship and conduct violations will result in potential ejection from the game at the home plate umpires discretion. Coaches and players that violate sportsmanship and conduct rules are subject to potential removal from the tournament and premises at the discretion of the Tournament Director including future tournaments and events. This will not be tolerated!
- 10.2** Family members, fans, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves appropriately. You are expected to cheer for your team and your Up and Coming Stars passionately. However, please refrain from any derogatory remarks towards umpires, coaches, players, other fans. Anyone not conducting themselves appropriately are subject to potential removal from the tournament and premises at the discretion of the Tournament Director including future tournaments and events. This will not be tolerated!

Rule 12.0 Event Fees, Rainouts & Refunds, and Umpire Payments

- 11.1 Event Fees:** Event Fees are listed on the UACS webpage and payments are collected at time of registration via a credit card or debit card. **A non-refundable 3% technology fee is added to each registration at the time of purchase.**
- 11.2 Rainouts and Refunds:** Fortunately, a lot of games and venues are on turf and every possible effort is made to play games. If a team starts or plays any game, a refund will not be given. However, in the unlikely event a tournament is cancelled due to weather or other factors, and a team is unable to play any games, a credit for future tournaments will be added to the account. **WORLD SERIES EVENTS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE and DO NOT RECEIVE ANY CREDITS TOWARDS FUTURE EVENTS IN THE CASE OF CANCELLATION.**
- 11.3 Removal Deadline:** Teams may remove themselves from a tournament up to 5 days prior to the event. After this time, a team will not be removed and will be responsible for the cost of the tournament registration fee.
- 11.4 Umpire Payments:** Pay-at-the-Plate. Coaches are required to pay umpires prior to the start of each game. Umpires are paid \$35 for 1-hour games and \$45 for 1 hour and 30 minutes games.

Rule 12.0 Teams and Individual Awards

12.1 Team Awards: Each player on the championship team will receive a UACS championship ring. Each player on the runner-up team will receive a UACS runner-up ring.

12.2 Individual Awards: UACS recognizes the following individuals awards at each tournament.

Homerun Award: Any player that hits an out the park homerun will be given a UACS homerun award. It is the head coach's responsibility to make the Tournament Director aware of these accomplishments during ring ceremony.

MVP Award / Invite: One player from the Championship team and one player from the Runner-Up team will be given an MVP Award and an MVP Tournament invite. Head Coaches are responsible for completing the MVP invite and giving it to the player and parents. Instructions for accepting the invite and the MVP Tournament will be listed on the card and on the www.UACSSports.com website. MVP awards and invites should be given out individually after the ring ceremonies.