

**Lamar Parks & Recreation  
 USSSA Fast Pitch Official Playing Rules (distilled)  
 2012**

with Lamar League Adjustments

**DIVISIONS**

- a. Girls 2-3 grade      Junior Softball
- b. Girls 4-5              Minor Softball
- c. Girls 6-7              Major Softball
- d. Girls 8-10             Senior Softball

Girls entering 10<sup>th</sup> grade may play if they are not yet 16

<b>PLAYING FIELD</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>* Pitching</b>	<b>Base Path</b>	<b>Ball</b>	<b>Time Limits</b>
	Junior	35 Ft.	60 Ft.	11"	1 Hour
	Minor	35 Ft.	60 Ft.	11"	1 hour 15 min.
	Major	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	12"	1 Hour 30 min.
	Senior	43 Ft	60 Ft.	12"	1 Hour 45 Min.

\*indicates the distance from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.

Alcoholic beverages and tobacco, in any form, are all prohibited on the field or in the dugout.

If any league does not have enough players to form adequate number of teams (as determined by the Recreation Board and Recreation Director) leagues may be combined for the single season.

The parent/guardian of every child signs a code of conduct on the registration form that says; the league may release any child from playing and/or refuse any adult, whether coach, parent or spectator the privilege of attending any practice, game or event for violent or abusive behavior or inappropriate language toward any player, official or other spectator.

All players and coaches should demonstrate the highest degree of sportsmanship at all time. Cursing, fighting and/or throwing equipment, abusive, threatening, or intimidating language, or any intentional physical injury to players, coaches or umpires is grounds for asking the offending player, coach or spectator to leave the game. A repeat incident is grounds for the offender to be removed from the game, the league, or from the spectators stands for the rest of the season. Any further incidents may result in the player coach or spectator being permanently barred from any further league games that season and also from any future Recreation Department event. Bad sportsmanship, or violence, will not be tolerated

**All-Play / Equal Play** -----

Lamar recreation leagues are "All Play" leagues. Every child will be given equal, or nearly equal, playing time, both in the field and at bat.

An exception to the rule may be made for players who have missed the two previous practices for the game, providing regularly scheduled or called practices are held during playing season. They must be allowed to play, but may be reduced in playing time by half, at the discretion of the coach. We do not seek to punish the child for the parent's failure to get them to a practice, and sometimes it is beyond anyone's control.

If a violation of the rule occurs due to circumstances beyond the control of the coach/league, every effort will be made to place the shorted player in the first-play lineup for the immediate next game.

**Lamar League "Short / Long" Rule**

This rule is explained by this example: and is in effect for every league game

A team is supposed to field a minimum of nine players:

- o If both coaches agree before the game they may play 10 players. Both MUST agree.
- o If the team fields 8 there is no penalty. (there only "penalty" is to play short)
- o If the team can field 7 there is a one-out penalty every time the 8th player would have come to bat.
- o If the team cannot field 7 – the team forfeits.

Once a team has forfeited:

- any registered player may play a “pick-up” game so long as coaches and umpires agree.
- This game cannot go into overtime to delay a scheduled game.
- All other rules are observed.
- Players showing up after the game is forfeited does not change the outcome of the forfeit. and the originally scheduled game is NOT started. The players may enter the pick up game if they choose, but the original scheduled game has already been forfeited.

===== **Rules Common to All Divisions** =====

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> team in the pairing on the schedule is “**Home**” team no matter where the game is played.
2. **Run Rule:** a game will be called and the winner declared if one team is ahead at the following points: 12 runs after 3 innings, 8 runs after 4 innings.
3. **Intentional walk** will not be allowed.
4. **Bat** the line-up, not the entire team roster. If a player sits out an inning and does not field, she is not on current batting line-up.
5. **Base coaches** must be adults (17 Min) not players
6. Bat boys or **bat girls** are not allowed.
7. **UNIFORM:** Players shall be in league uniform to play. The uniform tee provided is the only shirt allowed (unless by special permission of the Director for unusual circumstance.) Tee’s structure may not be altered (cut out sleeves, cut off etc.) and NOTHING may be added to the front of the tee. Names or other modifications may be done on the back only. Jewelry is to be removed or taped to the body. Stud earrings are allowed if nothing hangs below the ear lobe.
8. All players shall be on the bench or in the bullpen while their team is at bat.
9. Batters shall wear **betting helmets** while warming up in the batter’s box or designated batting circle. If no batter’s circle is marked, it should be beside of the entrance to the dugout,
10. When a team is on **defense**, all reserve players shall be in the dugout or bull pen.
11. A manager or **coach shall not enter the playing field** except with permission of the umpire to
  - to confer with a player
  - confer with an umpire
  - coach at a base

A manager or **coach may stand outside** of, but within 3 feet of the **gate** to the dugout. Dugout gates should remain closed for the safety of players inside.
12. The **infield fly rule** is not in effect at any time.
13. Teams may have two adult **base coaches** on the field, one at third base, one at first. Base coaches must stay in their designated areas, and talk only to their own team.
14. There is **no designated hitter**, or extra hitters.
15. No new inning shall begin with five minutes or less on the clock.
16. **PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES**
  - A team shall consist of at least nine players, whose positions shall be; (1) Pitcher, (2) Catcher, (3) First Baseman, (4) Second Baseman, (5) Third Baseman, (6) Short Stop, (7) Left Fielder, (8) Center Fielder, (9) Right Fielder, and/ or an additional player
    - IF both teams use an additional player ;determined before the game starts, and not changed after the game starts. The additional player may play the short fielder position, playing on the outfield grass.
  - Any **starting player** removed for a **substitution** may re-enter the game once, providing player retains the same batting position as in the original line-up.

- Any player removed for a **substitution** may **re-enter** the game once, providing:
  - Her substitute has played at least six consecutive outs, and,
  - Has had at least one turn at bat.
- A **pitcher**, removed from pitching but remaining in the game, may be moved back to pitcher's position once in a game.
  - A pitcher removed from pitching for a substitution, may not re-enter as a pitcher. (Does not include offensive substitution of a courtesy runner for the pitcher)
  - Substitutions for a pitcher must be made between batters unless the pitcher becomes incapacitated. The umpire is the sole judge of necessity.
- If two or more substitute players enter the game at the same time, the coach shall immediately tell the umpire (and thereby the other team/ scorekeeper) which player is substituting for which position.
- A player on the batting order may not substitute as a "courtesy runner" for another batter on the line-up. Courtesy runners must be a player not in the current batting line-up. Courtesy runners take their position once the batter has reached first base.
- Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as a courtesy runner.

## 17. Forfeits

A game shall be forfeited to the offended team when a team:

- is ten minutes late in appearing or in beginning play after the umpire calls "Play Ball."
- refuses to continue play after the game has started;
- delay more than one minute in resuming play after the umpire calls "Play ball" or in obeying the umpire's order to remove a player for violation of the rules;
- persists in tactics designed to delay or shorten the game;
- willfully and persistently violates any one of the rules after being warned by the umpire.

Score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 unless the game is forfeited after the number of innings required for a regulation game and the offending team is behind. Then the score remains as recorded. If the offending team is leading, the score shall be 7 to 0.

## 18. The Game

- Games shall consist of **seven innings**, or at least three complete innings, run the time limit, run through the batting order, or shall satisfy the run rule.
  - An **inning side** is three outs, 7 runs, whichever comes first or through the batting line-up once, (not the whole roster, just whomever has played defense that inning).
  - If the home team scores a go ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning, or after time limit has expired the game is terminated at that point
- "**Time**" is the command of the umpire used to suspend play. The ball is dead once given.
- Prior to each game, the umpire will hold a brief meeting at home plate to discuss field rules. Coaches are required to participate in this meeting. The coach for each team shall give the official scorekeeper a roster of players, in batting order
- In the case of a **tie game**, if time is not expired, and seven innings have been played, game may continue until time, and complete that full inning. **NO MORE THAN ONE** inning will be played to break a tie game in overtime.
- If a game is suspended before three innings, it may be resumed later in the day or another day, in order to complete the game from the point where it was suspended.
  - The game is complete if play has gone beyond three full innings and is called at a point when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bats.
  - The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.

- No team shall play three games in one day, and may not play more than one double-header in a calendar week.
- A game of less than three innings being completed from a another day's suspension is not considered a double header.

## 19. EQUIPMENT

- Approved batting **helmets** with extended ear flaps, which cover both ears and temples are mandatory for all batters, and any offensive player in live ball territory, even if the ball is dead.
- Batters shall wear batting helmets while warming up in the batter's box or designated batting circle. If no batter's circle is marked, it should be beside of the entrance to the dugout,
- **HELMETS** - When an umpire observes anyone required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removing the batting helmet while the ball is alive, and that person is in live ball territory, the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the involved persons team. All subsequent violations of the rule shall result in an out.
- **Shoes** are required equipment. Shoe sole or heel protectors other than the standard shoe plate are prohibited. Metal cleats and metal toe plates are prohibited. No open toed shoes are allowed on the field by player, ump or coach.
- **THE OFFICIAL BAT** shall be round or three sided and measure not more than 34 inches long, and not more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part and its weight shall not exceed 38 ounces. The bat shall have a safety grip of tape, cork, or some other composition material, to facilitate holding the bat, during the batter's swing. The safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches long, nor extend more than 15 inches from the small end or handle end of the bat.

## 20. SLIDING

**A.** A **legal slide** is feet first ONLY. At least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner shall be within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot when the slide is completed.

**B. A slide is illegal if:**

- the runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder;
- the runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position;
- the runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder;
- the runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg; or the runner tries to injure the fielder.
- the runner slides headfirst.
  - A fall-back or lunge from a standing still position is not a slide. A slide is defined by its forward motion.

**C. The slide rule** is in effect for every league game. If a fielder has opportunity to field the batted or thrown ball, and is in process of making a play, the runner cannot intentionally run into the fielder. The runner must slide to avoid a collision if possible. If the runner fails to do so, runner is out. Calls are the discretion of the umpire.

## 21. PITCHING / pitchers

- Anyone warming up a pitcher must wear protective gear while doing so
- No defensive player may reach into or enter the pitching circle. Result will be a dead ball called with the Batter advancing to first, and all other runners advance if forced.
- A manager or coach may visit the pitcher's mound twice in an inning, never more than once while a single batter is at bat. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit the pitcher shall be removed.

- The coach/ manager may visit the pitcher at the mound no more than four times in a game, or the pitcher shall be removed on the fifth visit.
- A removed pitcher may be substituted at any other position, but not as pitcher.
- If an illegal pitcher pitches a ball and the defensive team accepts it, the result of that pitch is legal. Remedy to the illegal pitcher must be made before the pitch is made and should be made before the next pitch. If a pitcher is changed while a single batter is at bat, the count remains the same as before the pitcher was removed.

## 22. **BATTING**

- A. All players may bat. There is no designated hitter, or extra hitters.
- B. **PENALTY: For batting out of order.**
  - A batter shall be called out on appeal when she fails to bat in her proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in her place.  
Only the defensive team may appeal out of order after the batter has completed her time at bat.
  - When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire *before the next pitch* (legal or illegal), or before the infielders leave the diamond if a half-inning is ending, the umpire shall declare the proper batter out and return all runners to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.  
Exception: Any outs made on the play stand. An out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on a play.
  - If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch or passed ball while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal.
  - When the proper batter is called out because she has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter who was called out.
  - If an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the succeeding batter, or all infielders have left the diamond if a half-inning has ended and, in all cases, before an appeal is made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of her time at bat become legal  
When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is properly made as above, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batter order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.  
NOTE: When several players bat out of order before discovery so that a player's time at bat occurs while she is a runner, such player remains on base, but she is NOT out as a batter.
- C. A batter shall not **intentionally** permit a pitched ball to touch her.
  - **PENALTY:** The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike at umpire's discretion), unless pitch was a third strike, for an out.
- D. A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate. by stepping out of the batter's box, by making any other movement which hinders action at home or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away.
  - **PENALTY:**
    - 1) When there are two outs, the batter is out.
    - 2) When there are not two outs and a runner is advancing to home, the runner is out and the ball is dead, unless the runner is tagged out, in which case the ball remains alive and interference is ignored.
    - 3) When an attempt to put out a runner at any other base is unsuccessful, the batter is out and all runners must return to the base occupied at time of pitch.

## 23. BASE RUNNING

- A. Runners may not lead off in any division. The runner must be touching the base when the ball is pitched i.e.: "leaves the pitcher's hand" and runner is out if not on base when pitched.
- B. Stealing of bases is permitted **unless otherwise prohibited in division rules below**, one base per **pitch** or overthrow.
- C. Once the pitcher has the ball under control within the pitchers circle, the runner must move directly towards the next base or the last base touched. The runner, off base may not stand motionless. However, if the pitcher makes an attempt on the runner then ball is live.
- D. If a batted ball (fair or foul other than a foul tip) is caught, the initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch.
- E. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over slides may immediately return without liability of being put out, provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.
- F. If a batter-runner is entitled to return to first base after overrunning, or if a runner fails to touch home plate, and if either such runner desires to **return to** such **base**, the runner shall return immediately.
  - o PENALTY: For failure to touch base (advancing or returning), or failure to tag up after a fly ball, the runner is out.
  - o This is a delayed penalty if not played upon by the defense during same play-action (live ball). During play-action, the runner is out if, before returning to each **untouched base**, the runner is touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder, or the ball is held by a fielder on that missed base (including home plate). In this instance, the out would be called immediately before time is called. When a runner is legally returning after a long fly ball has been caught, she can be put out by being tagged or by the defense merely touching the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a base running infraction is the third out, runs scored by the following runner(s) would not count or when a runner crosses home plate after a preceding runner is declared the third out for a base running infraction. With two outs, if the base missed was the first to which the batter or runner was forced to advance, no runs would score.
  - o When a runner is **obstructed** while advancing or returning to a base, by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted ball, the umpire shall award the obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. If the obstructed runner advances beyond the base the runner would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, the runner advances with liability to be put out. If a runner maliciously runs into a fielder, there shall be no award for obstruction. If any preceding runner is forced to advance by the awarding of a base or bases to an obstructed runner, the umpire shall award this preceding runner the necessary base or bases. The penalty for faking a tag is obstruction.
  - o When **obstruction** occurs, the umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and calls out "obstruction." If an award is to be made, the ball becomes dead when time is taken to make the award.

Each runner including the batter-runner is awarded

1. Three bases: If a fair batted ball (other than in item a) is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, held or kicked by a fielder.
2. Two bases:
  - a. If a fair batted ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or, when passing through a fence, becomes blocked;
  - b. If a live thrown ball (not by a pitcher from the pitcher's plate as in item d) goes into a stand for spectators, or a players' bench, or over or through or lodges in a fence.
  - c. NOTE: When two runners are between the same bases on an overthrow into dead-ball territory, the lead runner receives two bases and the following runner is awarded one base, since both runners cannot share the same awarded base.

- d. EXCEPTION: Runners between second and third would score, because the award does not result in both runners occupying the same base.
  - 3. One base:
    - a. If a pitch by the pitcher from the pitching position on the pitcher's plate goes into a dead-ball area, becomes blocked, lodges in an umpire's or catcher's equipment;
    - b. If there is an illegal pitch which is not ignored
- G. Any runner is out when:
  - o Running more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged, or to hinder a fielder while the runner is advancing or returning to a base. EXCEPTION: This is not an infraction if a fielder, attempting to field a batted ball, is in the runner's proper path and if the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interfering. NOTE: When a play is being made on a runner or batter-runner, the runner establishes her base line as directly between the runner's position and the base toward which the runner is moving.
  - o She does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her. PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball is dead immediately and interference is called.
  - o She does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her. PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball remains alive unless interference is called. NOTE: Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder only if the fielder is lying on the ground.
  - o Malicious contact occurs (always supersedes obstruction).
  - o A fair-batted ball contacts her before it touches an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the umpire judges that another infielder has a play. EXCEPTION: If a runner is touching a base when hit by a batted fair ball, the runner is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or an infielder making a play. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. All base runners return to the base occupied at the time of the infraction, unless forced to advance.

## 24. APPEALS

- o Live ball appeal (before umpire calls time). Any fielder can appeal a runner once. Ball is live and all runners may advance with liability of being put out.
- o Dead ball appeal. Umpire signals "Play Ball", pitcher announces which runner and base he is appealing. The ball is now live only for making an appeal. Effect: 1. Defensive team can have only one attempted appeal per runner.
  - No runner may advance on a dead ball appeal.
- o A runner is not out if she steps off base during an appeal.
- o An appeal play  
A situation where the umpire ignores a batting out of order infraction. A form of appeal may be made by the defensive team tagging a runner or the base she occupied at the time of the pitch, after the batted ball is caught or after a missed base, before the runner has retouched, while the ball is live.

## PROTEST

Umpires will work to settle all problems on the field. Protest will be allowed for rule interpretations only. Rule Protest must be declared to the plate umpire **before the next pitch following the dispute**. Protest following the game must be made in writing, and addressed to the Lamar Parks & Recreation Director. A clarification or determination will be made and all coaches will be notified.

# Rules Pertaining only to Specific Divisions

Junior & Minor League: If the last batter on the lineup for that inning is up to bat, the offense team must notify the umpire and the defense. If it will be the 3rd out, the out may be made anywhere. If not 3rd out, play is over when the catcher has possession of the ball and touches home plate.

## Junior Pitching Machine

1. The Machine will be set in the pitching circle and set at 54 RPM. Or 35-37 MPH
2. Any ball hitting the pitching machine will be considered a dead ball and the batter awarded first base. All other runners advance only if forced.
3. Only the umpire may adjust the pitching machine speed
  - once at the top of an inning if deemed needed
  - or once after the machine has been hit by a batted ball
4. An "at bat" will consist of 3 strikes or six pitches. There are no strikes 'called' only swing-and-miss. If the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled, pitches continue for another pitch, until there is another strike or passed pitch. If, in the opinion of the umpire, there is an errant pitch, another pitch will be thrown.
5. The ball is dead if at any time during live play the pitching coach touches the ball  
All runners return to last base touched.
6. A 20 foot arc for "Fair Ball" territory will be marked from 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to 1<sup>st</sup> base line. The batted ball must clear this line to be in "fair" territory. If it does not clear the line, it is considered a foul ball.
7. No lead off and No stealing is allowed.

## Junior and Minor Divisions

A ball is dead when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitching circle and has stopped live play. If a runner is more than half way to the next base when the pitcher takes the circle, the runner is awarded the base. The umpire shall make all judgment calls regarding this. If the pitcher puts the ball back into play it is live and this rule is not in force.

## Minor Division

Stealing is permitted in Minor League to 2nd and 3rd only, NOT HOME -1 base per pitch./ overthrow. NOTE: Running home on an OVERTHROW is not stealing... since the ball is still in play.

## Senior Division

1. The "dropped third strike rule" is in force.  
A batter who is called out on a third strike may advance at her own risk to first base **only if**
  - The catcher drops the ball and
  - 1<sup>st</sup> base is unoccupied at the time the pitch was delivered. Leading off is not allowed, so if a runner is on 1<sup>st</sup> when the ball is pitched, that constitutes the base being occupied.