

Fastball Official Game Rules



1.0 General

- 1.01 Fastball follows “Official Baseball Rules” of Major League Baseball as seen on their website, http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/official_rules/foreword.jsp, with modifications listed below.
- 1.02 **Offensive Rules** – Consist of nine batters, with no maximum. If starting with fewer than nine players all players must hit.
- 1.02.1 **Hitting** – Base-on-Balls: **3 balls**. Strike-out: **2 strikes**. Bunting is allowed. A/B batting positions are allowed.
- 1.02.2 **Base Running** – No leading off, but base stealing is allowed. No “taking out” defensive players at any base; runners must slide to avoid contact with defensive players when there is a play made at a base or the runner will be subject to ejection (umpire discretion).
- 1.02.2.1 **Stealing Rule** – Stealing after the ball crosses the plate will be allowed on a league/tournament basis as approved by the local jurisdiction and FASTBALL. Without approval, stealing once the pitcher releases the pitch will be used. The runner will be called out if breaking the stealing rule; the pitch will be declared a dead-ball.
- 1.02.2.2 **Courtesy Runner Rule** – Team managers may designate a maximum of two players per game who will not be required to run the bases but will have courtesy runners for them. These designated players must run for themselves to at least first base. If a designated player declines the courtesy runner, he forfeits his designated runner for the remainder of that game. A courtesy runner can be anyone on the roster.
Comment: Catchers may always use a courtesy runner when they are on base with two outs to get ready for defense and it does **not** count towards the two courtesy runner maximum. If the team has designated two players and an additional player is injured during a game requiring a courtesy runner, then the team must require one of the designated players to run for themselves so the injured player can have a courtesy runner and the team stays within the two courtesy runner maximum.
- 1.03 **Defensive Rules** – Consist of no more than nine players on the field at any time. Free defensive substitutions are allowed. Defensive players do not have to be in the batting order. Any defensive player faking a tag at a base to cause an inadvertent slide from a base runner is subject to ejection (umpire discretion).
- 1.04 **Pitching Rules** – Overhand pitching only and no lower than 45 degrees. Only fastball rotation; a change of speed is allowed but not a change-up that has a different ball movement. All “breaking pitches” (curves, sliders, splits, knuckles, circle changes, etc.) at the discretion of the umpire will be called an illegal pitch (see illegal pitch rules), except in the Elite division where breaking pitches are allowed.
- 1.04.1 **Illegal Pitch Rule** – Any pitch is deemed an “illegal pitch” when it is deemed to be a “breaking pitch” (umpire discretion). The pitch will be called a “ball”.
Comment: This rule and its sub-rules do not apply in the Elite division.
- 1.04.1.1 **Illegal Pitch Cancellation provision** – If the illegal pitch is hit by the batter, then the illegal pitch is nullified and the batter must take the result of any continued play.
Comment: If the hitter hits a foul ball and it is caught by the defensive team the batter will be out. If a foul ball goes out of play the pitch will be called a strike. If the batter swings and completely misses the pitch and the umpire declares the pitch to be illegal, then the pitch will be called a ball.
- 1.04.1.2 **Base Stealing provision** - Illegal pitches are live balls; runners can be thrown out trying to steal.
- 1.04.2 **Blatant Illegal Pitch Rule** – The second illegal pitch by the same pitcher in the same game will immediately be removed as pitcher and the pitch declared a balk. The pitcher can still continue to play both offense and defense but cannot pitch the rest of that game.
- 1.05 **Time Limit Rules** – All Fastball games will be 7 innings or 60-75 minutes in length whichever comes first. Time limits are determined prior to the league/tournament. Valid time limits include 60, 65, 70, and 75 minutes. Time limits should not be altered once a league/tournament has started, but can be revised the following league/tournament. No new inning will start if there is less than 5 minutes remaining with the time limit, and if tied follow the tied score provision (see rule 1.05.3). All championship games have no time limit but will play a full 7 innings to determine a winner.
- 1.05.1 **Between Innings** – One minute between innings: On 10 second intervals, strikes will be called if the offense is not ready; balls will be called if defense is not ready. Exception: catcher was on base or was the last batter.
- 1.05.2 **Between Pitches** – The pitcher must deliver the next pitch within 10 seconds of receiving the ball back from the catcher; strikes will be called if the offense is not ready; balls will be called if defense is not ready. Exception: time is called by the umpire.
- 1.05.3 **Tied Score Provision** – Fastball tournaments and leagues will play extra innings to determine a winner. The first extra inning will start with the last batted out as a runner on 2nd base to start each half inning. Each subsequent extra inning will start with the last batted out as a runner on 3rd base to start each half inning until a winner is determined.
- 1.06 Fastball is governed and sanctioned by the **United States Fastball Association (FASTBALL)**.

2.0 Field

- 2.01 Fastball is played on a regulation softball field with 65 foot bases.
- 2.02 The pitching plate will be at a distance of 60 feet.
- 2.03 Fences will normally range from 250’ to 350’, depending on playing divisions and playing levels, and available facilities.

Fastball Official Game Rules



3.0 Equipment

- 3.01 Balls are official 9.5 inch (RIF Level 10) Fastballs manufactured and distributed by FASTBALL.
- 3.02 Bats must have a wood or composite hitting surface, unless otherwise authorized in writing by FASTBALL.
- 3.03 Metal cleats will be allowed on a league/tournament basis as approved by the local jurisdiction and FASTBALL. Without approval, non-metal cleats shall be used.
- 3.04 Catchers must wear protective equipment.
- 3.05 The batter, base runners, base coaches, and on deck batter must wear a NOCSAE approved batting helmet - double earflaps.

4.0 Uniforms

- 4.01 Team uniforms for tournaments must consist of matching jerseys and caps.

5.0 Age and Skill Divisions

Comment: Leagues/tournaments may be divided into the following age and/or skill groups.

- 5.01 Age Divisions – Determined by the youngest player on the team roster.
 - 5.01.1 14+yrs
 - 5.01.2 16+yrs
 - 5.01.3 18+yrs
 - 5.01.4 25+yrs
 - 5.01.5 35+yrs
 - 5.01.6 45+yrs
 - 5.01.7 55+yrs
 - 5.01.8 Each age division hereafter will be divided in 5 year increments.
- 5.02 Skill Divisions
 - 5.02.1 Recreational

Comment: Maximum of 4 players with high school varsity baseball experience or higher on team roster should play in this skill division.
 - 5.02.2 Competitive

Comment: Maximum of 6 players with high school varsity baseball experience or higher on team roster should play in this skill division.
 - 5.02.3 Elite

Comment: 7 or more players with high school varsity baseball experience or higher on team roster should play in this skill division. No illegal pitch restriction.

6.0 Father-Son Teams

- 6.01 Sons must be 16 years of age prior to the first day of the league/tournament.
- 6.02 There must be a minimum of 4 fathers on defense at all times. Exception: There may be fewer than 4 fathers on defense if the defense is made up of “related” fathers and sons. If the “related” father/son combinations add up to 8 players, the ninth player must be a father.
- 6.03 No more than 2 sons may bat consecutively. An out will be assessed each time this rule is violated.
- 6.04 Every player must designate themselves as a father or son before the game starts. No player is allowed to play as both a father and a son in a single Fastball game.

7.0 Co-Ed Teams

- 7.01 There must be a minimum of 4 women on defense at all times.
- 7.02 No more than 2 men may bat consecutively. An out will be assessed each time this rule is violated.

Fastball Rules are subject to change at the beginning of each calendar year or upon Board approval.

Current copies of the rules can be found at WWW.USFASTBALL.COM.