

PANTHERS SLOW PITCH RULES

2019

ASA slow pitch softball rules apply except where superseded, expanded,
or replaced by Panther Sports Club rules.

THE PLAYING FIELD

	<u>Bases</u>	<u>Pitching Rubber</u> (measured from back of home plate to front of pitching rubber)
Coach Pitch	60'	35'
Ponytails	60'	35'
Majors	60'	40'
Seniors	65'	46'

Home team is responsible for setting up field and putting field equipment away if there is no game following. However, visiting team is encouraged to help set up if home team is running late. Issues with any field equipment should be reported to the Field Equipment Manager.

Home team gets 3rd base dugout. Visiting team gets 1st base dugout.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

- 1) Maximum bat length:
 - a) Coach Pitch, 32"
 - b) Ponytails, 32"
 - c) Majors, 34"
 - d) Seniors, 34"
- 2) All bats must have intact hand grips and be "official" softball bats. (It does not matter if slow pitch or fast pitch bat)
- 3) Batting helmets must be worn by all base runners, batter, and on deck batter.
- 4) Catcher must wear chest protector and catcher's helmet.
- 5) All pitchers at Ponytail, Majors, and Senior levels must wear protective face mask. Coach pitch is excluded from this rule.
- 6) Softball used:
 - a) Coach Pitch will play with an 11" soft indoor ball
 - b) Ponytail will play with an 11" hard ball
 - c) Majors and Seniors will play with a 12" hard ball

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- 1) No restriction on color of player's gloves or shoes.
- 2) No jewelry may worn by any player during the game. This includes earrings of any kind. The only exception is religious necklaces may we worn, but must remain tucked in and not interfere with safety of player during play. If religious emblems cannot be tucked in or do not stay tucked in, player may be asked to remove them. Refusal to remove may result in player not being allowed to take the field.
- 3) Players may not chew gum during games, and may not have food or drink, including sunflower seeds on the field.
- 4) Rubber cleats only. Player is also allowed to wear gym shoes.

- 5) Player must wear Panther issued uniform. This includes: game shirt, socks, and pants. Visors are optional. Uniforms may not be modified or altered. This includes but not limited to tie-dye, addition of patches, cutting off of sleeves, etc.
- 6) If a player chooses to wear a hat it must be either a Black Panthers Slow Pitch visor or Black Panthers Slow Pitch baseball cap. The only exception is players may wear a winter cap during cold weather games; Panthers Slow Pitch Beanie is preferred.
- 7) Players are allowed to wear coats or sweaters over their shirt during cold weather games.

PLAYER RULES

- 1) Players can practice and play in games with only the team that they are officially registered with (per current Panthers registration records).
- 2) Player must have current registration form with complete information including doctor's name, doctor's phone number, and current insurance information. Player is ineligible to play without this form being present at game field prior to the start of each game.

Coaches

- 1) A registered head coach or registered assistant coach must be present at all practices and game.
- 2) Per Panther rules only 1 head coach and 2 assistant coaches can be registered coaches. Both head coach and assistant coaches must be approved by the Panther board. Coach pitch may also have one additional registered parent helper.
- 3) At practices and during pregame warm-ups parent volunteers are allowed to help as long as a registered coach is present.
- 4) Only the head coach, registered assistant coaches, the team score keeper, and registered players are allowed in the dugout and on the field during games. In the event one or more of the coaches is unavailable, a parent helper may be substituted to allow for the maximum of 3 coaching staff. All other parents, siblings, and friend must remain outside the dugout.

THE GAME

- 5) All games scheduled for 6:00 p.m. will start at 6:00 p.m., regardless of missing players, coaches, or umpires. If umpire is absent, the coaches will umpire the game. The two teams will alternate umpiring one full inning at a time. A new inning cannot start after 7:45 p.m.
- 6) Playing time:
 - PONYTAIL: By the end of the 4th inning, every player must have played one inning in the infield, one inning in the outfield, and at least three total innings in the field. (Penalty: opposing team may file a protest possibly leading to a forfeit. Protest must be stated to the head umpire prior to the start of the 5th inning.) For playoff games the same rule applies except girls are not required to play both infield and outfield.
 - MAJORS & SENIORS: By the end of the 5th inning, every player must have played one inning in the infield, one inning in the outfield, and at least three total innings in the field. (Penalty: opposing team may file a protest possibly leading to a forfeit. Protest must be stated to the head umpire prior to the start of the 6th inning.) For playoff games the same rule applies except girls are not required to play both infield and outfield.

- COACH PITCH: No players sit on bench when their team is on defense. After infield positions are assigned, the rest of the players will play outfield.
- 7) If a Pitcher is removed, she may not pitch again during the same inning.
 - 8) Coaches (including assistants or parents assuming a temporary coaching role) are allowed one trip to the mound per pitcher per inning. Upon the second trip the pitcher must be removed and replaced with a new pitcher.
 - 9) Base coaches can not touch base-runners. (Penalty: base runner is out and play is dead.)
 - 10) Players arriving after the start of a game will be entered at the bottom of the batting order but can be added to defense immediately.
 - 11) Runner substitution is allowed only due to an injury, in which case the substitute will be the last player to have batted who is not on base.
 - 12) If batter is injured during her at bat, the last player to make an out will finish her at bat.
 - 13) A minimum of seven players is required to start and play a game. A game may not continue with less than seven players and will be deemed a forfeit.
 - 14) Games are a maximum of seven innings long. Games are considered official when, in the 4th inning, the team that is trailing has batted and made three outs. This includes playoffs.
 - 15) Slaughter rule:
 - At the Ponytail level, the game is over when a team has an eight run lead after four complete innings.
 - At Major level, the game is over when a team has a ten run lead after five complete innings.
 - At Senior level, the game is over when a team has a twelve run lead after five complete innings.
 - 16) All regular season games that end in a tie will be recorded as a tie.
 - 17) Games are to be called in the event of:
 - Lightning
 - Excessive rain (at the discretion of the umpire or Slow Pitch Committee members)
 - Heat (above 95 degrees) or cold (below 40 degrees).
 - 18) Games called will start new from inning number 1 unless one of the following happens:
 - Ponytails have completed 3 1/2 or 4 innings
 - Majors and Seniors have completed 4 1/2 or 5 innings
 - Any game is beyond 3 innings and up by the slaughter rules for that level.
 - 19) If a playoff game is in progress and called due to weather or darkness prior to being official (per rule 9) the game will be rescheduled. At that time it will be restarted and played as a new game.
 - 20) Overthrows at Ponytail level: all base runners are allowed to advance one base on an overthrow at any base. This is at the runner's own risk and not a guaranteed advancement. Base runners can still be thrown out if they try to advance.
 - 21) Max run rule:
 - a) Ponytails max run rule is six per team, per inning.
 - b) Majors max run rule is seven per team, per inning.
 - c) Seniors max run rule is eight per team, per inning.
 - 22) Outfielders must be on grass prior to the ball being hit. (Penalty: if ball is put in to play, base runners are safe. If 3rd strike, the pitch is treated like a foul ball.

- 23) Any base runner that is in fair territory that makes contact with a batted ball prior to the defense touching it is out regardless if the defender is in front of or behind the base runner.
- 24) Any foul tip caught by the catcher before it touches the ground is an out, regardless of the ball's height off the ground.
- 25) No infield fly rule at any level.
- 26) Coaches can switch no more than two defensive positions per inning, and only one time per inning. This does not include the Pitcher or an injury situation.
- 27) Players not fielding a position, batting, running a base, or in the on deck circle must remain in the dugout during play, and may not enter the field of play. Designated "Bat Girls" may enter the field to retrieve a bat only after time has been called and play has stopped. Bat Girls must be wearing a batting helmet to enter the field.
- 28) Coaches not coaching either 1st or 3rd base (or pitching for Coach Pitch only) must remain in the dugout during play, and may not enter the field of play unless time has been called. Coaches may not stand in the field along the fence outside of the dugout or along the 1st or 3rd base line fence. Coaches retrieving a bat must wait until time is called and play has stopped.

PITCHING

- 1) Pitch must have an arch. If rolled or bounces on the ground before crossing the plate and the batter does not swing, it will be declared a no pitch. If the batter swings and misses it is a strike. If the batter swings and puts the ball into play, it is a live ball.
- 2) Height of pitch
 - a) PONYTAILS: Pitch must reach min. of 5' and max of 10' in height.
 - b) MAJORS and SENIORS: Pitch must reach min. of 6' and max of 12' in height.
- 3) Pitches must land on the pitching mat behind home plate to be called a "strike." If the catcher catches the pitch prior to it landing on the ground, the pitch is an automatic "ball."
- 4) Pitcher must have one foot in contact with pitching rubber during approach and until the ball is released.
- 5) Coach Pitch coaches should still pitch from pitching rubber so the girls get used to the ball coming in from a proper arch.

BATTING

COACH PITCH:

Only a registered coach can pitch to the batter. Batter will get five pitches. If ball is not put in to play at that time, then the ball will be placed on a tee. There are no strike-outs or walks at the Coach Pitch level.

PONYTAILS, MAJORS and SENIORS:

- 1) Each team will receive one warning for a thrown bat. After that, each thrown bat situation will be declared an out and base runners will have to return.
- 2) Batting out of order is an appeal play, not a protest.

BASE RUNNING

- 1) No base stealing.
- 2) Base runners must have one foot on base until the ball crosses home plate. Any base runner that leaves the base prior to the ball crossing the plate can be called out. If no contact is made with the ball, runners must immediately return to the base they were at or run the risk of being thrown out at the base they left.
- 3) Any base runner that deliberately removes her helmet during the play is out. Other runners will return to the base that they were at time of violation. (Umpire's discretion.)
- 4) Sliding is allowed but not required.
- 5) Base runner must attempt to avoid contact when being tagged. Intentionally running or sliding into a defender with unnecessary force will result in an out and a dead ball.

- 6) When a play is being made at first base, the defender has rights to the white base and the batter has rights to the orange base. If there is no play at first base, the base runner is allowed to touch the white base. In this case, if the defender is standing on the white base, thus preventing the base runner from making a turn toward 2nd base, the base runner may be awarded 2nd base if in the Umpire's opinion the defender caused interference.
- 7) Fielders protecting 2nd, 3rd, or Home have a right to the base if there is a possibility of the runner advancing and creating a play at that base. The fielder may not block the base preventing the runner from advancing if the play is being made at a different base other than the one they are protecting. Likewise if more than one fielder is blocking the base preventing the runner from advancing the umpire may call obstruction regardless of if a defensive play was attempting to be made.
- 8) A fielder standing in the baseline is not automatically considered defensive obstruction.
 - a) If a fielder is unintentionally and non-maliciously standing in the baseline while not attempting to field a batted or thrown ball and not directly in the vicinity of and blocking the base and no contact is made between the fielder and the opposing runner it will be a judgment call by the official. Although the fielder should make every attempt to not block the straight line path of the runner, the runner is allowed 3 feet on each side of the line and should make all attempts to avoid contact.
 - b) If the fielder intentional makes contact with the runner it is defensive obstruction and the runner will be awarded the base they were heading to and possibly one additional base (umpire discretion).
 - c) If the fielder intentionally moves into the runners path while not trying to field a hit or thrown ball or pretends they have the ball to slow down the runner it is defensive obstruction and the runner will be awarded the base they were heading to and possibly one additional base (umpire discretion)..
 - d) If the runner intentionally or maliciously makes contact or collides with the fielder then it the runner is out.
- 9) **All obstruction and interference calls are at the umpire's discretion and not a challengeable call.**
- 10) If a base runner makes a turn at first base toward 2nd base, they can be tagged out if the tag is made prior to the base runner getting back to first base. If a base runner runs past first base and down the foul line, she can return safely back to first base regardless of which way she turns around as long as her intention is clearly to come back to first base.

DEAD BALL

- 1) The Umpire shall call "time" when, in his/her opinion, the ball is controlled in the infield and the base runners momentum has stopped.
- 2) On a ball thrown out of play, base runners are allowed the base they are running to plus one more base at the time the ball is thrown.

SCORING

- 1) Home team's score book will be the official score.
- 2) Umpire must sign the Home team's score book, thus acknowledging the score to be official.
- 3) If the 3rd out is made prior to a run scoring, the run does not count.
- 4) If the 3rd out is made due to a force play at any base, any runs that may have come in prior to the force out will not count.

PROTEST

- 1) Umpires judgment calls cannot be protested -- only calls in regards to rules.
- 2) ONLY the head coach or acting head coach can file a protest (and only to the Head Umpire).
- 3) Protest must be declared prior to next pitch following the incident in question.
- 4) After a protest is officially and properly declared, the game shall continue. After the game is finished, the coach may file a hand-written protest if they choose and turn it over to the Slow Pitch Commissioner within 48 hours of the game in question. This will not automatically result in any turnover of result of the game.
- 5) Any concerns regarding an Umpire should be brought to the Head Umpire or Slow Pitch Commissioner.

FORFEITED GAMES

Game shall be declared forfeit by the Umpire in favor of the team not at fault in one of the following cases:

- Player medical forms are not complete and present.
- A team does not have a minimum of seven [7] players to start a game.
- Verbal or physical abuse by a player, coach, or spectator toward another player, coach, spectator, or umpire.
- A team employs tactics to deliberately, in the Umpire's opinion, delay or hasten the game.
- If, after a warning by the Umpire, any one of the rules is willfully violated.
- In the case of an ejection, if the person being ejected in support of said team does not leave within one minute of the ejection. Ejected person must retreat to minimum distance of the parking lot.
- If a player ejection leads to their team having less than seven players.

PRACTICES

- 1) No practices on Tee-Ball, Little League or Baseball fields.
- 2) All softball fields are first come first serve. There is no scheduling or saving of fields for practices.
- 3) If a game is scheduled (slow pitch or fast pitch) on the field that you are practicing on, the game takes priority and the practicing team must relinquish the field to allow for the scheduled game to take place.
- 4) Any practice held inside a Bolingbrook Park District facility or a school will not be set up by any Panther Sports Club representative. Coaches must make arrangements with a venue if they desire an indoor practice and get approval of commissioner prior to holding practice.

ACCIDENT and INSURANCE PROCEDURES

- 1) Panthers Sports Club carries secondary medical coverage.
- 2) Immediately following any accident or incident, the coach must fill out an accident report. The coach must then submit the report to the Slow Pitch Commissioner as soon as possible

- 3) When going to a Doctor's office or Emergency Room as a result of an injury caused by participating in a Panthers Slow Pitch practice or game, be sure to follow any procedures your personal insurance requires.

Slow Pitch Commissioner: Chris Peterson

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Clarification on batting / base running rules & procedures

The Ponytails get 4 balls or 3 strikes, just like baseball. If a girl is hit by a pitch, it is a ball. Ponytail level has a max run count of six per inning.

At the Ponytail level we only allow one base on an overthrow, and that is at the runner's risk. Let's say the girl is safe at first and there was an overthrow, but the ball was still in the field of play.

The runner could try to advance and the defending team is encouraged to try to make the throw to 2nd. If the ball is overthrown at 2nd, the runner cannot advance again. We want to encourage the girls to try to make the play. We also have the umpires call "time" when the ball is in the defense's possession in the infield. We really do not want coaches running their girls just because they know a girl cannot make the throw.