

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

25 January 2017

The ESFPL abides by the official ASA/USA Softball rules unless otherwise described and defined in this document.

**Section 1 – General Rules** (these apply at all levels of play, unless otherwise amended in age specific rules contained within this document)

- A. If smoking is permitted at the playing facility, there shall be no smoking within 50' of the playing area. Playing area includes the playing field to out-of-play boundaries, benches, and warm-up areas.
- B. Code of Conduct: (this will be enforced by the league, it's representatives, and the umpires)
  - 1. No intentional roughness by one player against another. For example: tripping, deliberately crashing into, pushing, pulling, and hitting.
  - 2. No swearing permitted by players, coaches, umpires, or spectators. It is the responsibility of each head coach to police their players, coaches, and parents.
  - 3. The use of negative cheering or terminology against the opposing team is prohibited.
    - a. Terms such as no hitter, easy out, etc. are not allowed.
    - b. Cheers should be directed towards your team only.
    - c. Rule of thumb – if the cheer uses the word “you” meaning anyone not on your team it should be avoided.
- C. Violations of Code of Conduct must be brought to the league within 24 hours of incident; include umpire's name
- D. Umpires must be respected and their judgment calls and decisions are final.
- E. Protests
  - a. of an umpire's interpretation of softball rules must be made to the umpire before the next pitch or any subsequent play occurs.
  - b. The umpire shall then notify the opposing coach and sign both scorebooks at the point of infraction.
  - c. Verbal notification to the president of ESFPL shall follow within 24 hours of the protest and shall be further followed with a written protest to the ESFPL league president within 48 hours.
    - i. This written protest shall list all facts pertinent to the protest and will be made available to the umpire-in-chief of the Umpire's Association of Dauphin County ASA/USA.
    - ii. The ESFPL Executive Board shall arbitrate the protest.
    - iii. Protests of games due to ineligible or illegal players must be made at any time prior to the conclusion of the game being protested.
      - 1. Any post game discovery of such players and subsequent discipline will be at the discretion of the ESFPL Executive Board members.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

- iv. In a protested game where the protest is upheld, the game will resume at the point of protest.
- F. Coaches and players may not throw any equipment. Players throwing a bat: the first time is a team warning. The second time any player throws a bat the batter OUT – dead ball (no play).
- G. Only players, coaches, bat boys/girls and team officials may occupy players' benches during a game.
- H. Players may not wear any jewelry (except medical bracelets).
- I. Players must wear sneaker type footwear. No metal cleats (rubber cleats are permitted).
- J. Players must wear NOCSAE approved batting helmets with face guards when they are batting or base running.
- K. The catcher must wear full catcher's gear. The catcher's helmet must be NOCSAE approved, and if it is any type of mask other than a goalie style mask it must have a throat guard installed.
- L. Only ASA 2004 certified softball bats or newer may be used.
  - a. If a bat does not have a visible ASA/USA logo it may not be used.
  - b. Bats with any cracks or significant damage may not be used.
- M. Uniforms will consist of at least matching shirts, with the exception of swing players. Swing players should be denoted on team roster.
  - a. No optic yellow or optic green color is allowed to be used in uniforms, gloves, or other equipment.
- N. Home teams will supply one new and one fairly new game ball for each home game.
- O. Score books must be kept by each team to record each game (except for tee softball).
  - a. In the event of a scoring dispute, the home team score book will be the official score book.
  - b. It is the responsibility of the home team to report scores to the league commissioner.
- P. A team may field a maximum of 10 players, and a minimum of 8 players. Games will be forfeited if a team cannot field 8 players (except for tee softball which must field a minimum of 5 players).
  - a. Players must be on the team roster
  - b. Rosters may not be changed beginning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the official start date for the season. All changes must be reported to the President of the ESFPL prior to players participating in games or the deadline for the respective season.
  - c. Teams must list "call up" players on their official rosters.
  - d. Rosters are due to ESFPL prior to the start of the season, as directed by the league calendar.
- Q. An official line-up using the full name and jersey number must be presented to the coach or scorekeeper of the opposing team prior to the start of the game.
  - a. When players are added or dropped from the line-up the opposing coach/scorekeeper should be notified in the inning the change occurs.
  - b. No players to be added after the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning.
    - i Inning is concluded at the recording of the 3<sup>rd</sup> out in the bottom of said inning.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

- c. The ESFPL Executive Board reserves the right to request proof of age of player by birth certificate. Requests for proof of age should be made within 24 hours after completion of game.
- R. Bases shall be set at 60 feet (except for tee softball which is 45 feet). A double first base should be utilized unless the field is not equipped with one. Break away bases should be used for first base (when a double base is not being used), second base, and third base.
- S. Pitchers may pitch per ASA/USA or PIAA rules.
  - a. A back step is allowed in PIAA.
- T. One pitch constitutes an inning pitched by any individual pitcher. If two or more pitchers are used to pitch in the same inning, they would all be considered to have pitched a full inning each.
- U. New pitchers entering a game or existing pitchers between innings may take a maximum of 5 pitches to warm up. Exception: If a pitcher is replaced due to injury while on defense, the incoming pitcher is allowed to take a maximum of 10 pitches.
- V. A courtesy runner may be used for both the catcher and pitcher in the same inning.
  - a. The courtesy runner should be the last player to make an out that is available.
  - b. The player to be replaced must be the player that will be playing either pitcher or catcher when their team takes the field for the next  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning.
  - c. If a player is injured while batting a courtesy runner may also be used. Runner is to be player who was recorded as the previous out.
- W. When a pitched ball is not swung at nor called a strike by the umpire touches any part of the batter's person or clothing *even if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter*, it is a dead ball and the runner will be awarded first base.
- X. Bunting is allowed at all levels with the exception of tee softball.
- Y. Runners must attempt to avoid collisions, or they will be called out.
- Z. Bases must not be blocked by the fielders and must be accessible to the base runner. (unless they possess the ball and are trying to make an out at that base), **See ASA/USA rule on Obstruction.**
- AA. Two bases for an overthrow that goes out of play, unless otherwise specified in age appropriate rules.
  - a. Runners are awarded the base they were going to at the time the throw was released, plus one additional base.
  - b. Only exception is a wild pitch in which case the runners are only awarded one base.
- BB. Run ahead rule (except for tee softball and 8U): If any team is leading by 15 runs after the 4<sup>th</sup> inning or 12 runs after the 5<sup>th</sup> inning the game is over. The home team does not have to bat in the last half inning if they have already met the runs required to end the game.
- CC. International tie breaking rules are to be used for all levels when a complete game is reached, the score is tie, and the time limit has not expired. If time has expired and the score is tie, the score remains as such (with the lone exception being playoff games where a winner is necessary to advance).
- DD. Games are to be stopped in case of darkness and inclement weather or in accordance with the ESFPL and ASA/USA Lightning policy. If a game cannot be resumed, it is officially over if

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

the losing team has batted at least 4 innings. The score will revert to the last full inning. The ASA/USA umpire will decide if the game shall continue or not.

- EE. If a game is called before it is official, it must be played from the beginning when it is made up.
- FF. Rainouts during the playoffs must be played the next day unless that next day is a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. In other words, if a game is rained out on Thursday, either team has the option to say they can't play until Monday. If a team can't play the makeup game on Monday, they will have to forfeit.
- GG. It is mandatory for both coaches & the umpire (when used) to have a meeting at home plate before the start of every game. At this meeting, an official start time must be established to allow for enforcement of time limits and last inning run rules. **The umpire must read the ESFPL Code of Conduct Card (Section 1, B) to both head coaches and team captains. Rules for the level of play should be reviewed at this meeting as well.**
- HH. Rescheduling Games-- can only be postponed due to weather or field conditions.
  - i. The home team must let the league know the reschedule date of any rained out game within 7 days of its original date. It is the home team's responsibility to report to the league AND the umpire scheduler when a game is to be postponed due to weather.
  - ii. If opposing coaches cannot reschedule a game within the above time period, any concerned team may notify the president. The president shall then decide the date and time the game should be played. His decision shall be binding and final.
  - iii. The original home team shall supply softballs and pay the umpires.
  - iv. Games may only be rescheduled for other reasons if the league is given a one week notice.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

## Section 2 – Tee Softball (these rules apply only to this level of play)

- A. Games will start at 6:15 on weekdays, or at a previously agreed upon time on weekends.
- B. There will be 1 batting order for the entire game in which every player will bat.
- C. A team may field 12 players, with only 5 players in the infield beside the pitcher and catcher. They must have a minimum of 5 players to start a game.
- D. Coaches may be on the field to direct their defense.
- E. When a throw from the outfield reaches the infield, runners may not advance beyond the base they were headed towards.
- F. A half inning will end when a team has recorded 3 runs or 3 outs are made.
- G. Tee softball games will end 1 hour after the start of the game.
- H. All games end in a tie (score should not be kept).
- I. Base runners must stay on base until the ball is hit.
- J. Batters will hit from the tee at all times. A coach from the team batting will assist them.
- K. A ball hit from the tee must travel 6 feet in fair territory or it is considered a foul ball.
- L. Bases will be 45 feet apart. A double first base is optional but not required.
- M. Tee ball or ASA/USA softball bats may be used. Baseball or wooden bats are not permitted.
- N. Every player must play a minimum of 3 innings in the field. A player may be added to the line-up if they come late, even if they can't meet the minimum play for that game.
- O. Game balls must be an Easton synthetic leather Incredi-ball, Wilson or Diamond RIF-1. The ball shall be 11-inch optic yellow, neon or white with red stitch.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

## Section 3 – 8U Softball (these rules apply only to this level of play)

- A. Games are to be 6 innings and will start at 6:00 or 6:15 on weekdays, or at a previously agreed upon time on the weekend. The visiting team must be given the opportunity to use the infield for at least 15 minutes prior to each game. Once the game clock reaches 1 hour and 15 minutes, the inning currently in progress will be completed, and the very next inning will be the last inning (see rule C for last inning rules).
- B. Every player present for a game is in the batting line-up whether they are in the field or not. Thus, all players will bat and 10 at a time will play the field. Every player must play a minimum of 3 innings in the field. This rule is waived in shortened games. There is no penalty for a player that has to leave a game prior to its conclusion. The team with the missing player must notify the other team of the player's absence and that player's spot in the line-up is skipped. Late arriving players may be added to the end of the lineup up to the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning. When adding players after the start of the game they must be placed at the end of the lineup, even if the team has not batted thru the lineup yet.
- C. A half inning will end when a team scores 3 runs or makes 3 outs. In the last inning of play, either the 6<sup>th</sup> inning or as determined by the time limit (see rule A), a team may score up to 5 runs or make 3 outs. The 5-run allowance does not apply to an unexpectedly shortened game.
- D. It is the responsibility of the home team to provide an umpire (which should be positioned in the field).
- E. Batters will be given up to 6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever comes first. There are no walks.
- F. A batter hit by a pitch WILL NOT be awarded first base.
  - a. If batter is unable to continue due to injury, there will be no penalty or out recorded. The next batter in the lineup will bat.
- G. Base stealing is not allowed.
- H. No infield fly rule.
- I. Once a runner reaches base they may only advance to another base or score on a live hit ball. Runners may not lead off a base, and can only leave the base when contact is made by the batter.
- J. The defense will consist of a pitcher, a catcher, four infielders, and four outfielders positioned at least 10 feet behind the base paths. The outfielders may not participate in the primary play at a base – defined as: Outfielders may throw to a base to get an out, but may not receive the throw.
- K. Pitching - a player must be assigned to pitch each inning of defensive play according to following rules —
  - a. player may only pitch a max of 2 innings/game
  - b. **player throws first 3 pitches, if ball is not hit within these pitches, coach will finish the 6 pitch limit per batter**
  - c. **pitcher MUST wear mask or batting helmet**
- L. **Batter — player has 6 pitches in which she tries to hit ball, no walks**

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

- a. therefore, if ball is not hit by 6th pitch, the batter returns to the bench and an out is awarded
  - b. however, batter gets an opportunity to stay batting if she fouls off the 6th or subsequent pitches
- M. Coach—
- a. offensive coach
    - i. will be at the mound throughout his/her team's offensive inning,
    - ii. coach will backup pitcher when ball is thrown back to from catcher/defensive coach,
    - iii. coach will take over pitching duties after 3rd pitch,
    - iv. coach needs to pitch from within circle, but not necessarily from rubber,
    - v. coach must make every attempt to throw a line-drive, minimal arc pitch to his/her players
  - b. defensive coach
    - i. will be placed behind the catcher during his/her team's defensive inning,
    - ii. coach will backup catcher and may pick up ball once the catcher has made an attempt to stop pitch
    - iii. coach will throw ball to offensive coach or pitcher
- N. Infield/Outfield-
- a. infield constitutes the field within and including the 60' base path
  - b. outfield constitutes any area beyond the 60' base path
  - c. runner may only run to next base if ball is hit into play
  - d. If ball is hit to the outfield, runners may continue running to the next base and any subsequent bases until the defensive team has possession of the ball in the infield.
  - e. outfielders may not cover any base
- O. When a throw from in the outfield reaches the infield and is possessed by any infielder, runners may not advance beyond the base they were heading towards. Even if there is multiple base runners, and a play is being made on another runner the other player may not advance as long as it remains in possession of that infielder.
- P. Free substitution of players in the field is allowed.
- Q. The Worth 11" Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) Level 1 SR11RYSA softball will be used as the game ball. No substitutions are allowed.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

## Section 4 – 10U Softball (these rules only apply to this level of play)

- A. Games are to be 6 innings and will start at 6:15 on weekdays, or at a previously agreed upon time on the weekend. The visiting team must be given the opportunity to use the infield for at least 15 minutes prior to each game. Once the game clock reaches 1 hour 30 minutes, the inning currently in progress will be completed, and the very next inning will be the last inning (see rule C for last inning rules).
- B. Every player present for a game is in the batting line-up whether they are in the field or not. Thus, all players will bat and 10 at a time will play the field. Every player must play a minimum of 2 innings in the field. This rule is waived in shortened games. There is no penalty for a player that has to leave a game prior to its conclusion. The team with the missing player must notify the other team of the player's absence and that player's spot in the line-up is skipped. Late arriving players may be added to the end of the lineup up to the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning. When adding players after the start of the game they must be placed at the end of the lineup, even if the team has not batted thru the lineup yet.
- C. A half inning will end when a team scores 4 runs or makes 3 outs. In the last inning of play, either the 6<sup>th</sup> inning or as determined by the time limit (see rule A), a team may score up to 8 runs or make 3 outs. The 8 run allowance does not apply to an unexpectedly shortened game.
- D. Paid ASA/USA umpires must be used for all games at this level. It is the home team's responsibility to pay the umpire and supply the game balls.
- E. Pitching
  - a. Pitching distance shall be 35'.
  - b. Pitchers may only pitch 3 innings per game.
    - i. Those innings do not need to be consecutive.
    - ii. A partial inning is considered a full inning.
      - 1. Defined as: if pitcher A has trouble in the first inning and can only get 1 out, and pitcher B is brought in to get the last 2 outs of that same inning, they both would be considered to have pitched 1 full inning even though only 1 inning was played so far.
  - c. After a pitcher has walked 3 batters in an inning and a 4<sup>th</sup> walk count is reached in an inning the hitting teams coach shall enter and finish pitching that at bat.
    - i. The coach must pitch from the pitching rubber.
    - ii. Coach must make every attempt to throw a line-drive, minimal arc pitch to the batters.
    - iii. The coach inherits the existing strike count, and the umpire continues to call strikes.
    - iv. The pitcher returns to the mound to pitch to the next batter, however if a walk count is reached again that inning the coach comes in to pitch again, and the process repeats itself until that inning is over.
  - v. When a new inning is started a pitcher must walk 3 batters again, and reach a 4<sup>th</sup> walk count again before the coach comes in again to pitch.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

- F. There is NO dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike at this level.
- G. No infield fly rule.
- H. No catch and carry rule.
- I. **Base Running:**
  - a. Stealing will be allowed but is not continuous (only 1 base at a time), meaning if a batter is walked and 2<sup>nd</sup> base is open, the runner MAY NOT advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> on the walk.
  - b. Runners may only advance one base on an overthrow from an infielder (except catcher).
  - c. When an outfielder throws a BATTED ball in to the infield, runners MAY continue advancing until it is possessed by an infielder.
    - i. Once an infielder (except the catcher) possesses the ball thrown in from the outfield, then makes a throw in an attempt to get an out, the overthrow rule comes in to effect-- only ONE BASE is awarded on an overthrow by an infielder (except the catcher). The ball is then dead and play stops.
    - ii. If the catcher possesses the ball and decides to throw attempt to make an out at a base, the runner will not advance on an overthrow by the catcher.
  - d. Runners are allowed to steal home.
  - e. Base runners may not leave the base or take a lead until the ball has crossed home plate.
    - i. For the 1<sup>st</sup> violation a team warning is issued.
    - ii. For all other violations, the runner is out – dead ball, no play.
- J. The defense will consist of a pitcher, a catcher, four infielders, and four outfielders positioned at least 10 feet behind the base paths.
  - a. The outfielders may not participate in the primary play at a base. Defined as:  
Outfielders may throw to a base to get an out, but may not receive the throw.
- K. Free substitution of players in the field is allowed.
- L. Intentional walks are allowed – in such case a coach must call time out, and then the batter will automatically advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base without being pitched to. (Dead Ball Rule)
- M. An 11” optic yellow softball with red stitch max compression 375 pounds 0.47 COR Leather ball will be used for all games. Synthetic material is not allowed.

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

## Section 5 – 12u, 14u, & 18u softball (these rules apply only to these age groups)

- A. Games are to be 7 innings and will start at 6:15 on weekdays, or at a previously agreed upon time on the weekend. The visiting team must be given the opportunity to use the infield for at least 15 minutes prior to each game. Once the game clock reaches 1 hour 30 minutes, the inning currently in progress will be completed, and the very next inning will be the last inning (see rule C for last inning rules).
- B. Every player who shows up for a game in uniform must play at least 2 full innings in the field and bat at least once. Exceptions to this would be injuries to a player either before or during a game, or a rain shortened game. In case of injuries to a player, a girl may re-enter the game providing no other players are eligible to play. This means that if all of your substitutes have already played their 2 innings and batted once, and a regular player is injured, a substitute may be brought back in to the game in the injured players batting position. Once a player is removed due to injury, she may not re-enter the game unless she has re-entry rights. If a coach, for either disciplinary or health reasons, determines he/she should not play a particular girl or girls in a game, he/she shall inform the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
- C. A half inning will end when a team scores 5 runs or makes 3 outs. In the last inning of play, either the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or as determined by the time limit (see rule A), a team may score unlimited runs or make 3 outs. The unlimited run allowance does not apply to an unexpectedly shortened game.
- D. Paid ASA/USA umpires must be used for all games at these levels (12u, 14u, and 18u). It is the home team's responsibility to pay the umpire and supply the game balls.
- E. Pitching distance shall be 40' for 12u & 14u. 18u shall pitch at 43'.
- F. Pitchers may only pitch 4 innings per game. Those innings do not need to be consecutive. Please remember that a partial inning is considered a full inning. In other words, if pitcher A has trouble in the first inning and can only get 1 out, and pitcher B is brought in to get the last 2 outs of that same inning, they both would be considered to have pitched 1 full inning even though only 1 inning was played so far.
- G. Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is in effect.
- H. Infield fly rule is in effect.
- I. Catch and carry is in effect. If a batted fly ball is caught in bounds and carried out of bounds by the defensive player, the batter is out, the ball is dead and 1 base will be awarded to the base runners.
- J. Stealing will be allowed continuous to any base. Walking steals are allowed (This is when a batter walks and continues running to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the key being continuous. If a runner stops at first, they must remain at 1<sup>st</sup> and cannot continue to 2<sup>nd</sup>). Runners are allowed to steal home. Base runners may not leave the base or take a lead until the ball has been released from the pitcher's hand. For the 1<sup>st</sup> violation a team warning is issued. For all other violations, the runner is out – dead ball no play.
- K. A team must field 10 players if available. When only 8 players are available the ASA/USA short-handed rule will be waived and the game may be played. If the team fielding 8 players

# 2017 ESFPL RULE BOOK

loses a player due to injury or ejection the game is over, and the other team is awarded a forfeit.

- L. A team must bat 10 players if available (8 or 9 may be used if short-handed), or they may choose to bat all available players (players must still play the field at least 2 innings). Teams may also bat 11 using an EP (see rule M) and substitute the remaining players (see rule B).
- M. An extra player (or EP) is optional, but if used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the scoring sheet in the regular batting order. If the EP is used, she/they must be used for the entire game. The team must end the game with the same number of starting batters.
- N. Intentional walks are allowed – in such case a coach must call time out, and then the batter will automatically advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base without being pitched to. (Dead Ball Rule)
- O. If due to injury or illness during the course of the game, a player must be removed from the lineup and there is no player available to replace her, then her position in the batting order will be skipped over (no out will be declared). The injured or ill player may not re-enter the game.
- P. Any team declared loser by forfeit shall pay any umpire's fee. This is waived if the team losing by forfeit is due to any cause that makes them not have the required 8 players after the game has started.
- Q. A 12" optic yellow softball with raised red stitch max compression 375 pounds 0.47 COR  
Leather ball will be used for all games. Synthetic material is not allowed.