



APPLETON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Official Rules Girls (Grades 3 & 4 and 5 & 6)

2024

RAINOUT INFORMATION (920) 832-3900 (Option 1)

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The following rules and regulations have been established to allow participants to compete in a safe and fair environment. Participants and coaches are to be familiar with these directives. These rules may be subject to change if during the season a team gains an unfair advantage over other teams due to a given rule in the league. All coaches and players will be notified of any rule changes made during the season. All leagues will follow NFHS rules except where defined below:

A. General League Rules

1. These leagues are for girls who have completed 3rd or 4th grade, and 5th or 6th grade, in the school year immediately preceding the softball season.
2. Players are not permitted to transfer to another team in the program once she has played one game with the original team, unless there are unique circumstances and permission granted by the program coordinator.
3. Scores will be kept, results will be recorded, and standings will be posted approx. two days after the game.
4. Ribbons will be awarded to the first and second place team of each division at the end of the season.

B. Players, Field, & Equipment

1. Regular lineup will consist of 10 players; four of these will be playing the outfield and the remaining six will be in the infield.
2. Appleton Parks & Recreation operates on an equal playing time philosophy. Players should sit / sub out no more than one inning before re-entering the game.
3. Teams must have a minimum of eight (8) players to begin the game. Games must start and end on time, so there will be no grace period for teams having less than eight players. In the event a team is shorthanded, a win will be declared for the opponent, and a scrimmage game will be played using all available players from both teams. All "borrowed" players must bat at the bottom of the batting order.
4. All players must wear protective headgear up to bat and on base. Do not exchange batting helmets between teams. Each team will be issued five. Catchers shall wear a catcher's helmet, throat guard, shin guards, and chest protector.
5. Fielders masks will be provided by APRD and are required to be worn by 1B, 3B and Pitcher positions. Players may use their own mask if preferred, as long as mask is certified for game play.
6. Participants must remove any jewelry, watches or other potentially dangerous items prior to the start of the game for the safety of all participants. No metal spikes are allowed.
7. Sliding is instructed on close plays at this level; therefore, appropriate softball pants are encouraged. Pants should fully cover the knee.
8. The Infield Fly rule will NOT be used in this league.
9. While batting, all players (with the exception of the batter and on-deck batter) must remain IN the dugout.
10. After the first game of the season, the batter will be reminded once to not throw their bat after a hit. Repeated occurrences may result in an out being called in an effort to reinforce the importance of bat safety.
11. Base distance is 60 feet; official pitching distance is 35 feet.
12. The game ball will be an 11" RIF U12 softball for the 3rd & 4th Grade program, and an 11" Youth Softball for the 5th & 6th Grade program.

C. Game Length:

1. All games will be six (6) innings or 90 minutes, whichever comes first. No inning will start with less than 10 minutes remaining. If the game ends in a tie, it will be recorded as such.

D. Pitching:

1. All pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of three innings per game. After 3 innings, they must be replaced by a new pitcher.

2. Pitchers should feel comfortable throwing at speeds they are capable of, and should be encouraged to do so, while still retaining accuracy. They should never be encouraged to OVER throw, however, as this contributes to injury and loss of accuracy.
3. **The pitcher must have one foot on the rubber at the time of the start of the pitch and all pitches will follow the WIAA/NFHS softball rules.**
 - a. **In 3rd / 4th Grade**, a 12 o'clock to 9 o'clock delivery should be used. **With the option to progress into a full windup delivery, however a full windup should only be used after pitchers have successfully acquired the necessary mechanics to pitch utilizing a 12 o'clock to 9 o'clock modified delivery.**
 - b. **In 5th / 6th Grade**, a pitcher may use a full windup delivery motion, however a full windup should only be used after pitchers have successfully acquired the necessary mechanics to pitch utilizing a 12 o'clock to 9 o'clock modified delivery. **The 12 to 9 delivery MAY BE USED in the game setting, if preferred, while working towards a full windup.**
4. Coaches may visit the mound once per inning to talk with a pitcher. On the second visit to the mound in the same inning by a coach, the pitcher will be replaced. The pitcher may play another position or re-enter the game in a different inning as pitcher.

E. Batting

1. All players present for the game must be included in a continuous batting order.
2. A turn at bat will consist of either three outs or **six runs**, whichever comes first.
3. Bunting is allowed, HOWEVER, prior to game use, players should be taught the proper mechanics of the bunt, and the strategic reasons for use of the technique.
4. If the player is hit by a pitch, they will be awarded first base
5. The third strike will automatically be an out. The catcher does NOT need to maintain control of the pitch.
6. **Base On Balls – 3rd / 4th Grade** - After four balls batter's coach will throw up to three pitches to their batter, in attempt to put ball in play. Failure to put ball in play will result in an out, however the batter cannot be ruled out on a fouled 3rd coach's pitch. In this case, another pitch will be allowed.
7. **Base On Balls – 5th / 6th Grade** - After the fourth ball, batter will be awarded first base.

F. Base Running:

1. The runner shall use the orange safety base when running through first base. This is for the safety of both the runner and the fielder. Repeated failure to do so will result in the player being called out for interference.
2. A base runner cannot leave the base until the ball crosses the plate (no leading off)
3. **Stealing – 3rd / 4th Grade – No Stealing. 5th / 6th Grade - Base stealing will be allowed throughout the season. Base stealing will NOT be allowed IF the offensive team is leading by SIX or more runs. Runners may not steal home plate. This includes coming home on a wild pitch or an overthrow.**
4. **Base runners may advance a maximum of one base on an overthrow to any base, and the player runs at his/her own risk.**
5. Base running collisions are to be avoided and runners are encouraged to slide on close plays, both for their own safety, and for the safety of the defensive player. If a base runner fails to slide and as a result creates a collision with a defensive player during an out attempt, they will be called out at the discretion of the umpire.
6. A base runner may not intentionally interfere with a defensive player who is in position to make a play of the ball. If this occurs, the runner will be called out for interference.

G. Coaching Staff:

1. Only one offensive coach is allowed in each coaching box in foul territory.
2. Only coaches and players are allowed in the dugout, unless permitted by the coach.
3. If a team's catcher is unable to adequately catch/secure pitched balls or prevent them from reaching the backstop regularly, a coach may be asked to stand near the backstop to assist their catcher in retrieving pitched balls in an effort to reduce the time between pitches.

H. Weather Cancellations & Early Game Completion:

1. In the event of inclement or dangerous weather, the league may cancel and/or reschedule games. If a game is canceled, information will be posted immediately to the Appleton Parks & Recreation Facebook page, and to our APRD weather line at 920-832-3900 (Select Option 1). If weather is questionable, but no cancellation has been posted, teams should report to their field. While we may play in conditions that are less than ideal, we will never play in conditions that put the health and safety of our participants at risk.
2. If there is a visible lightning strike / audible thunder during the game, the game will be suspended immediately.
3. All games called due to weather by the umpire shall be regulation if four or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team at the end of 3 ½ innings.
4. Teams unable to play a scheduled game should contact the APRD at 832-5905 (preferred 48 hour notice) as a courtesy to their opponent and the staff. Games will not be rescheduled by the APRD for any reason except for inclement weather.

I. Sportsmanship

1. The goal of the APRD youth baseball / softball program is to introduce and help children develop the skills that will allow them to fully enjoy the game of softball. We strive to create a safe a fun, inclusive, stress free atmosphere for children to learn, and sportsmanship and fair play is emphasized. Parents and spectators are EXPECTED to enthusiastically uphold and endorse our core beliefs of skill development, sportsmanship and fun through both their words and behavior.
2. Our coaches receive training that communicates the beliefs and goals of the Appleton Parks & Recreation department youth sports program, and are provided with tools, materials, and support to help them deliver quality softball instruction to our young players. We expect our coaches to be shining examples of good sportsmanship and ethical behavior, as well as enthusiastic ambassadors of our program beliefs and goals. Coaches should openly discuss proper sportsmanship with their players and parents.
3. The program coordinator and site supervisor will not tolerate abuse, foul language, and inappropriate behavior from coaches, players, parents, or fans, and for the good of the program, this behavior will be dealt with promptly and decisively.
4. Appleton Parks and Recreation reserves the right to assign penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct upon review. Appleton Parks and Recreation also reserves the right to further the penalty upon assessment of the situation.

J. APRD Staff

1. Two umpires will be used for all 5th and 6th grade games, and when possible, for 3rd & 4th grade games. In the absence of 2 umpires, a single umpire may be used to supervise games in the 3rd & 4th grade age group.
2. The site supervisor will be on-site if issues arise.
3. Please report any concerns, questions, or problems to the program coordinator or umpire.

K. Lost & Found

1. If you find any lost equipment, please turn it in to the umpire at your site.