



## 2026 RULES FOR HARNETT COUNTY CHURCH LEAGUE SOFTBALL

### SPORTSMANSHIP

- Sportsmanship will be displayed at all times
- No alcohol will be permitted on premises
- Any coach or player with the odor of alcohol on him/her will be ejected
- No profanity will be permitted; profanity will result in an automatic ejection
- No throwing any equipment (bats, helmets, gloves, etc.); this will also result in an ejection-no warning, player will be ejected
- Flagrant behavior, questioning umpires character will result in ejection with no warning
- Punishments for repeated verbal abuse of officials from teams can result in:
  - Team being excluded from end-of-season tournament
  - Removal of team from league with forced forfeitures for the rest of the season
- Recreation Program Supervisor and Field Supervisor may exercise the right to eject players or coaches for unsportsmanlike conduct while on premises

### THE GAME

- No new innings shall be started after sixty (60) minutes of playing time. If there is time remaining once the third out is recorded, the next inning shall begin. There is no time limit for championship games ONLY.
- Game time is forfeit time
- 1<sup>st</sup> game will have a 5 minute grace period; it will be part of the game, after that no grace time
- Starting time for games will be 645 PM, 745 PM, and 845 PM
- All will start with a 1 and 1 count, 3<sup>rd</sup> strike foul, you are still out
- Each team must have a minimum of 8 players to start the game; they may use a courtesy catcher if they only have 8 players, the courtesy catcher can't do anything but return the ball to the pitcher
- Minimum age for a participant to play is 15
- **COURTESY RUNNER:** Any eligible player on the official line up including substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning (for any player other than the pitcher). The courtesy runner CAN run for the same person that they replaced within the same inning, should that person's spot in the lineup return; the batter must reach base first before being replaced by the courtesy runner. A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate umpire. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be called out and removed from base to take their turn at bat. A second courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury.
- **Additionally each team's pitcher CAN make use of a courtesy runner while on base.**
- If a team loses a player during the game due to injury, that players spot in the batting order will be skipped; that player is no longer eligible to play in that game;
  - If player is ejected from the game then an out will be recorded when that players spot comes up in the batting order.
  - If a player in the batting order chooses to leave the game for any other reason, they must either be substituted for in the lineup, or an out must be recorded in their place.
- Players should have alike jerseys with a number on the back of the shirt
  - If shirt does not have # on back, player will not be allowed to play in the game

- A player can only play on one team per softball season; If caught playing on multiple teams, the game will be a forfeit for offending team and player will be suspended for season.
- Women can be placed on the men's roster
- **FOR SAFETY:** If a runner is on 1st base and a left-handed batter is up, or if a runner is on 3rd base with a right-handed batter up, the runner can stand in foul territory until the ball is batted. They must retouch their base before advancing.
- Teams may have up to 25 names on their roster.
- **Rosters are due by Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 5 PM;** No new players may be added after this date, unless approved by program supervisor and league coaches
- Rosters must be signed by the pastor or deacon of the church
- If regular-season game remains tied after time limit or 7 innings, it will count as ½ win, ½ loss in the standings
- Tie-breaker rules for end-of-season standings (in order)
  - Win/Loss Record
  - Head-to-Head Record
  - Difference in scores of Head-to-head matchups i.e. Team A beats Team B 10 to 6 in Game 1 and Team B beats Team A 16-8 in Game 2; Team B would be higher seed (8-run margin of victory beats 4-run margin of victory)
  - Coin Flip with both representatives from both parties present
- **There is a FIVE over-the-fence homerun limit. Any over-the-fence homerun beyond this will count as a dead-ball out.**
- Homeruns: Batters that hit homeruns, do not have to touch 1<sup>st</sup> base, all other players on the bases will clear off and return to dug out
- **RUN RULE:** After a complete inning (or if the home team is at the limit or reaches the limit during its at bat), the game will end when a team is ahead by:
  - 20 runs after 4 innings
  - 15 runs after 5 innings
  - 10 runs after 6 innings
- **Home team is the official team scorer and will handle operation of scoreboard;** it is suggested that both score keepers communicate with each other to reduce errors in scorekeeping
- Any ball that is touched by any part of any player and goes over the fence is a four base error and will not count against the homerun total
- Only the head coach will be allowed to approach umpires for the discussion of any rule violation or interpretation
- **No baseball (steel) cleats allowed**
- **NO-CRASH RULE: The runner must be called out if he remains on his feet and crashes into a defensive player holding the ball.**
- Only ASA/USA bats or bats stamped ASA/USA approved are allowed in league; NO USSSA BATS
- There will be a 5 ft. leeway on pitching mounds for men and women from front to back of rubber
- Teams have the option to bat 10, 11 or 12 and must be designated prior to the start of the game as to how many; After 1<sup>st</sup> pitch and game starts you may only bat 10; if batting 11 or 12 you must designate prior to start of game to umpire and other team
- **All players will be subjected to ID checks before they can play in their first game of the regular season, and prior to first game of postseason play.** In addition, if the legality of a player is questioned the field supervisor can request to see a players picture ID during any game of the season or tournament. If the player does not have a picture ID on their person they can finish the game but must come into the Harnett County Parks & Recreation main office before the end of the next business day and present their identification to the program supervisor. Business days are considered from 8am until 5pm Monday through Friday (except County holidays). If the player does not present their ID within the allotted time he/she will be considered an illegal player and will be, along with the head coach or acting head coach, suspended from participating in the adult softball program for one calendar year and any games in which the player participated in will be considered forfeits.
- **Teams must call in advance or submit in writing, the day prior to game or as early as possible, for any forfeits; If a team has 3 forfeits during the season, that team will not be allowed to play in the tournament**

## BALLS

- Teams must supply their own balls
- Balls used must be no more than a core of .52 with a compression of 300 restricted flight
- When a team fouls a ball out, that team is responsible for throwing in a replacement ball

## EJECTION PENALTIES

- Any ejection will result in a 1 game suspension (1 additional game beyond the current game when ejection occurred).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ejection, a player will be banned for the rest of the season
- **Any ejection will result in leaving the game, as well as leaving park premises**

## REASONS FOR EJECTIONS

- Alcohol on premises, odor of alcohol on coach or player
- Profanity
- Arguing balls, strikes, safes, outs (judgement calls); warned then ejected or ejected right then with no warning
- Throwing of equipment
- Flagrant behavior and questioning umpires character; ejected right then
- Field Supervisor and County Recreation Program Supervisor have the authority to eject players and or fans from the game or ball park premises for any unfavorable behavior

## FEES

- All men's teams registering to play in the League must pay an entry fee of \$600 by Friday, April 24, 2026, before 5pm. Fees will not be refunded if a team is expelled or withdraws once the season schedule is released.

This league will be governed by ASA/USA rules except for the above rules.