

# FHCASA PLAYING RULES

Basic ASA Rules Govern with some FHCASA Rule Exceptions

As amended December 6, 2018

## THE PLAYERS

A. Age Qualifications – December is the official cut-off date. Any member whose birthday (50, 55, etc.) occurs on or before December 31 of that current year is eligible to play with a registered team in that age bracket or a lower age bracket.

B. Player Identification – A Player shall show proof of identity when requested to do so by an Officer, Commissioner, or Director of the FHCASA. A Player is ineligible until he shows both his FHC Card and a picture ID to the FHCASA personnel.

C. All Players on a team shall reside in the respective Area (1,2,3,4) from which the team is registered. Exception: Any Player that moves his place of residence from one Area to another Area may remain Grandfathered on the one primary team roster that he was a member of when he moved into the new Area. Being “Grandfathered” is not automatic. The Player involved must be approved by the Board and receive a Grandfathered Replacement Card.

D. A Player shall play for only one team on a tournament weekend.

E. Uniforms – All Players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are alike in base color, trim, and style. If a shirt is required to be changed, because of the blood rules, there will be no penalty. The person in charge of that Site will make the proper decision regarding the shirts.

1. Pitchers are not permitted to wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, or thigh that could be distracting to a batter.
2. Players may wear solid colored undergarments beneath their uniform shirts or shorts.
3. Numbers must be worn on all uniforms. Numbers on front and back must be a minimum of 6” tall. No Players on the same team may wear the same number.
4. Ball caps or visors must be worn properly. A protective helmet is allowed.
5. Casts, prosthesis and metal braces may be worn, but must be covered by a soft material, and must be taped.

## THE GAME

A. Time Limit: A time limit of 60 minutes shall be allotted in regular game play. When the 60 minutes expires, the teams shall finish that inning and one more complete inning if necessary. In the event the score is tied after regulation play, the Player who was the last batter to complete his time at bat will be placed on second base to start each additional half inning. After touching the base, the Courtesy Runner Rule may be used.

B. The clock is to be stopped in the event of an injury requiring medical attention.

C. The clock is to be started when all Players are on the field and the umpire calls 'play ball.'

D. Courtesy Runners: Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed at any time and may be anyone on the roster. A courtesy runner is in the game once the base is touched. A Player can be a courtesy runner only once an inning. A runner may not replace a courtesy runner unless there is an injury. The injured Player must be removed from the line-up and cannot return to the game. Any Player replaced by a courtesy runner may not become a courtesy runner in the same inning. Penalty for use of an ineligible courtesy runner shall be removal of the runner from the base and an out is recorded against the base runner for which the courtesy runner is used. If a courtesy runner is on base when it is his time to bat, he shall be declared out, and take his turn at bat. Exception: A substitute is entered into the line-up for the Player on base. That Player on base remains a courtesy runner but is otherwise removed from the line-up. Per the rules of substitution, the original Player may re-enter the game.

E. Offense: An offensive team may designate up to 15 Players in the batting order. The offensive team shall have a minimum nine Players present to start and finish a game in the 50's, 55's, and 60's Divisions and a minimum of ten Players to start and finish a game in the 65's, 70's, 74's, and 80's Divisions.

F. Defense: A defensive team shall designate nine Players present to take the field in the 50's through the 60's and may play as many as ten players. In the 65 to 80 Divisions, teams need at least ten Players in the field and may play with as many as eleven Players. Defensive Players may play anywhere on the playing field in fair territory.

G: In the event of an injury and the Player is removed from the game, and he is unable to take his time at bat: If there is no substitute Player to bat in his place, an out will be recorded the first time the injured Player comes up to bat. After that, the line-up will compress and there will be no more outs in that spot. Also, that injured Player is not allowed to play in that day's scheduled games.

H. Balls and Strikes: There shall be 4 balls and 3 strikes. In a regular game each batter starts with a one-and-one count. On the first foul ball after reaching a 2 strike count, the batter is out, and the ball declared dead. Exception: If the foul ball

is caught for the first or second out, the ball remains alive, and the runners may run at their own risk.

I. Pitcher's Plate: The pitcher's plate is located fifty feet from the rear point of home plate. The pitcher must be in contact with the pitcher's plate when releasing the ball on the plate at least momentarily, before releasing the ball. The pitcher must be facing the batter when releasing the ball.

J. Strike Zone/Plate Mat: A strike zone mat will be used. From the top of the plate, including the mat, the area shall measure 19"x34.5." The pitching arc shall be from 6' from the ground and 12' at its highest. If the ball hits any part of the plate it will be called a strike.

K. Catcher's Box: The box measures 8'1" wide by 10' deep. The catcher must remain within the lines of the box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, mat, or reaches the catcher's box.

L. Commitment Line: The commitment line shall be marked in foul territory twenty feet from home plate and at a 90 degree angle to third base. Once a runner touches or goes beyond that line the defense can only get the runner out by touching home plate, with the ball in hand, before the runner touches the plate. Once the runner passes the line he may not go back to third base. If he does, he is out.

M. Base Running: Base stealing is not permitted in FHCASA softball. A second home plate, or line, shall be placed adjacent to the left rear corner of the right-handed batter's box and in line with the first base line. A runner is called out if he touches the original home plate and not the extra plate. If he does, he is called out. At no time is the defender to touch the runner. If the runner is called out, the ball remains alive. The runner is also called out if he slides into the second plate.

N. Safety Base: A safety base is mandatory for first base. The safety base shall be placed so that the white portion is where the first base normally would be and the colored base is located in foul territory next to the white base. A batter/runner shall touch the colored base on the initial play, unless the throw forces the runner to run inside to avoid a collision. Then that play is up to the umpire to make the correct call. If there is a question of touching the wrong base intentionally or a bobbled ball, then appeal can be made to the umpires. If the ball is hit to the outfield either bag can be touched. If the ball is hit to the infield, the colored base must be touched unless there is a throw that takes the runner off line. If a runner slides into the safety base that runner is called out. A runner that does not discard his bat before reaching first base shall be called out. If a runner walks, the ball is dead and he is not out if he carries the bat to first.

O. Mercy/Run Rule: 14 after 5 for 50's & 60's. 15 after 5 for 65-70-74-79's.

P. Ejections: Players ejected by an umpire or FHCASA official shall sit out a minimum of that game and one more, and up to a suspension. The Site

Director has the authority to reduce or increase the penalty to the one game. All ejections are subject to FHCASA Board review and possible further action.

Q. Appeal of Rules: All appeals shall be made prior to the first pitch to the next scheduled batter or the defensive infielders and pitcher have left the field of play.

1. Procedure: Any player or manager of the two teams playing may ask the home plate umpire for time out. Once granted, either umpire may be asked to clarify the rule in question. If the answer is not clear the player or manager may ask the umpires to get together and discuss the rule or question.

2. Umpire Judgment: Decisions may not be appealed on calls involving: A. Balls and strikes, B. Safe or out, or C. Fair or foul ball. Exception: In the event of a possible A. Pulled foot, B. Bobbled ball, or C. missed base, a player or manager may ask the umpires to convene and discuss the play. The decision, after they convene, is final.

R. Protests: All disputes during tournament play must be resolved at the point of the protest. The clock is stopped at that time. The UIC, or Commissioner, will be called to hear the disagreement, if it deals with the "playing rules, or personnel rules." The UIC, or Commissioner, will make a final decision. After that is completed the clock will be restarted again. All decisions may be subject to review by the FHCASA Board of Directors.

S. Home Run: A home run over the fence, a four base award, or a four base error, allows the hitter to "hit and sit."

T. Game Balls: All tournament balls must be approved by the Board of Directors.

U. Game Bats: All bats must be approved by the Board of Directors. Bats may not be altered in any way from the manufacturer's design. A safety grip on the end of the bat, or tape, is legal. Bats that are worn, but still retain the legal markings are legal. Cracked or damaged bats that cannot be identified are not legal. Once a bat is removed from play, by an umpire or tournament Officer, it cannot be brought back into play. The player that uses an illegal bat will be treated with the same penalty as if using an altered bat.

V. Runs Per Inning Limit: Beginning on January 1, 2019, the 50's Division will be using a limit of 7 runs per team, per inning, with the last inning being declared "open," with no maximum run limit.

W. Pitching screen rules (Updated on January 9, 2019): The "pitching screen" must be placed in front of the pitching plate no more than 4ft. in front of the plate, and must cover a minimum of one half of the pitching plate. Once the screen is in place, it may not be moved in that half inning unless a new pitcher comes in or the screen is moved by a batted ball. The pitcher may release the ball from either side of the screen, but must have at least one foot in contact with the plate itself.

Before releasing the ball, and in contact with the plate, the pitcher must pause at least one second before he may release the ball, or it is an illegal pitch.

If the batter hits the screen with a batted ball, and there is less than 2 strikes, it becomes a dead ball immediately, and runners, if any, return to their bases. If there are 2 strikes on the batter and he hits the screen with a batted ball, he is out and the runners return to their bases.

After the pitcher releases the ball he must immediately move behind the screen. He may field the ball as soon as the ball is hit. If the umpire rules that the pitcher did not get behind the screen, the pitcher will receive a warning. If it happens a second time, the pitcher is removed as pitcher and cannot return in that position for the remainder of the game. He may play any other position. If a ball is released by the pitcher, and he is ruled not behind the screen, and the batted ball and caught by the pitcher, the umpire will rule the play dead, the batter will be awarded first base, and any forced runners will move up one base.

Any live ball thrown from any fielder that hits either side of the screen will remain in play.

In any 'one pitch' game, the first batted ball that hits the screen shall be an out.

## **ALTERED BAT PROCEDURE**

Directors and/or umpires can confiscate any bat believed to be altered. The bat may be sent to the manufacturer for testing, or be tested by a Board Officer using a bat-testing device. If deemed to be altered, the user will be immediately suspended for five years. If not, it will be returned to the player. If found to be altered at the site, the penalty could begin immediately. If a bat is confiscated, the game shall resume at that point. The accused player must voluntarily allow the bat for inspection by the FHCASA. If he refuses, he will be immediately suspended until the next Board Meeting, where a final decision will be made. If the bat is sent for testing, the Director will remove the tape and write down the ID number and give that to the player, as a receipt. If necessary, the FHCASA will send the bat to the manufacturer for testing. If the bat is not considered to be altered at the manufacturer, the player will receive a new bat purchased by the FHCASA just like the one that was tested.

### **Altered Bat Policy**

The FHCASA will take the bat when a player is struck directly by a batted ball and the player is injured. The same penalties mentioned above will prevail, if necessary. FHCASA reserves the right to confiscate any equipment deemed questionable for legal play. Anytime a bat is tested on site and the bat fails the onsite test, the player is to be removed for the remainder of the tournament. Additional penalties will be determined by the FHCASA. Penalties: Any player knowingly using an altered bat in a FHCASA tournament is subject to the following: If the player refuses to hand over the bat, he will be immediately ejected from that game. He could receive a penalty, from a suspension to a lifetime suspension from FHCASA tournament play. It is up to the Board to determine whether the bat will be sent to the manufacturer or to be checked on site. If the bat is sent the player will

be allowed to play until the test process is completed. Even if a bat is found to be altered, the results of the game will stand. If the bat is found to be altered, the player will be suspended for five years from participation in FHCASA activities.

### **Inclement Weather – One Pitch**

In the event of inclement weather, the Commissioners may invoke the “One Pitch” format. In a one pitch situation the following can happen, obviously: a batted ball, a walk, or a strikeout. If the batted ball is a foul, the batter is out. If the ball is live, runners may advance at their own risk.

**Time Limits** – 50’s Division – The time limit is 50 minutes and finish the inning, if necessary.

60, 65, 70, 74+, 80 Divisions – The time limit is 30 minutes, finish the inning, and play one more.

If there is a tie after regulation, the game is completed like all other regular games, with a “Tie Breaker.” Also, the courtesy runner rule is applied the same as well.

All teams must be at the field, and ready to play, one full game time before their scheduled game. This is in case there is a need to start early.

Pitchers – One minute will be allowed for 3 warm-up pitches to start the game and infield warm-up as well. After the first inning is played, the pitcher is limited to one warm-up pitch and there is no infield practice. Any game partially completed on Saturday will be completed under the regular format before going to “one pitch.” If a one-pitch format is used on Saturday, and the weather is good on Sunday, a decision could be made to go back to regular play.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR STATE TOURNAMENT**

**50's and 60's** - A team must have credit for playing in 6 tournaments by November of that calendar year. Other than playing in a tournament, a team may receive credit for registering for a tournament and that tournament is cancelled because of bad weather, such as a hurricane. A player must have credit for playing in 4 tournaments with the same team, and must be on that team's roster by October 1st. There are extenuating circumstances and a team or player may petition the FHC Board for a waiver.

**70's & 74's** - A team must have credit for 3 tournaments, and a player must have credit for 2 tournaments, by November of that calendar year to be eligible to play in the State Tournament. As in the 50's and 60's, a team or player may petition the FHC Board for a waiver.

Medical waiver petitions must be in by November 1st, and must be sent directly to the Chairman.

**\*\*\*\*Any rule, or procedure, may be altered or changed entirely by the FHC Board of Directors to make the game safer to play.\*\*\*\***

