



LEAGUE RULES MANUAL 2026

Martinsburg Fastpitch Softball, Inc.

Official Gameplay & Competition Rules

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

The League Rules Manual establishes all gameplay, competition, and on-field procedures for Martinsburg Fastpitch Softball, Inc. These rules apply to all divisions and supersede any conflicting provisions in the Policy Guidelines. Where this manual is silent, the **USA Softball Rule Set** governs.

2. RULE SET ADOPTION

Martinsburg Fastpitch Softball, Inc. adopts the **USA Softball Rule Set** as the official standard for all gameplay. League-specific rules in this manual take precedence. A laminated copy of the rules for A, B, and C Leagues shall be posted in every dugout.

3. LEAGUE STRUCTURE & AGE DIVISIONS

3.1. Eligibility is based on age as of **December 31** of the preceding year.

3.1.1. T-Ball: Ages 4–7

3.1.2. C League: Ages 8–10

3.1.3. B League: Ages 11–13

3.1.4. A League: Ages 14–18

3.1.5. Senior League: Ages 19+

3.2. Pregnant players may not participate for safety reasons.

4. GAME OPERATIONS

4.1. Home Team Responsibilities

4.1.1. Provide scorekeeper

4.1.2. Provide game ball and backup ball

4.1.3. Ensure bases, lining, and field prep are completed by 6:00 PM for 6:30 PM games

4.2. Visiting Team Responsibilities

4.2.1. Remove bases and return to storage

4.2.2. Rack or hand drag the base line, home plate and pitcher's mound.

4.2.3. Return tractor and equipment to proper storage

4.3. Both Teams

- 4.3.1. Clean dugouts and field area
- 4.3.2. Remove trash and place bags in dumpster

5. UMPIRE ASSIGNMENTS & STANDARDS

5.1. Assignments

- 5.1.1. **A League:** Two paid umpires; plate umpire must be 18+
- 5.1.2. **B League:** One paid umpire; junior umpires allowed with Board approval
- 5.1.3. **C League:** No paid umpires; junior umpires may volunteer

5.2. Authority

- 5.2.1. Umpires have full authority to enforce USA Softball rules and Martinsburg Fastpitch rules.

5.3. Training

- 5.3.1. Junior umpires must complete **two unpaid training games** before paid assignments.

6. LINEUP, SUBSTITUTION & COURTESY RUNNER RULES

6.1. Lineup Options

Teams may use any of the following formats:

- 6.1.1. 9 players
- 6.1.2. 10 players (9 + 1 Extra Player)
- 6.1.3. 11 players (9 + 2 Extra Players)
- 6.1.4. Continuous batting order
- 6.1.5. DP/Flex (per USA Softball rules)

6.2. Courtesy Runners

- 6.2.1. Allowed only for pitcher or catcher
- 6.2.2. Runner may enter once batter-runner reaches first
- 6.2.3. Courtesy runner is **last recorded out**

7. GAME TIME LIMITS

7.1. Standard Games

- 7.1.1. **1 hour 45 minutes**, finish the inning

7.2. Doubleheaders

- 7.2.1. **1 hour 30 minutes**, finish the inning

7.3. Ties

- 7.3.1. If tied at the end of regulation, **International Tie-Breaker (ITB)** begins immediately.

8. REGULATION, COMPLETE & SUSPENDED GAMES

8.1. Regulation Game

8.1.1. A game is official if:

8.1.1.1. 5 innings completed, or

8.1.1.2. Home team leads after 4+ innings

8.2. Suspended Games

8.2.1. A game is suspended if:

8.2.1.1. Weather

8.2.1.2. Darkness

8.2.1.3. Unsafe field conditions

8.2.1.4. Any condition endangering participants

8.2.2. Suspended games resume from the **exact point of suspension**.

8.3. Roster Eligibility During Delays

8.3.1. If a team cannot field a legal roster after a delay:

8.3.1.1. Game may be declared complete after 3 innings

8.3.1.2. If fewer than 2 innings played, Board may restart the game

9. RUN RULES & PER-INNING LIMITS

9.1. Run-Ahead Rule

9.1.1. 12 runs after 3 innings

9.1.2. 10 runs after 4 innings

9.1.3. 8 runs after 5 innings

9.2. Per-Inning Limits

9.2.1. **A League:** 10 runs per inning

9.2.2. **B & C Leagues:** 5 runs per inning

10. SLIDING RULES

10.1. **A League:** Head-first sliding permitted

10.2. **B & C Leagues:** Feet-first sliding required

10.3. Head-first return to base is allowed in all leagues

11. PLAYER LEAVING THE GAME

11.1. If a player leaves mid-game and no substitute is available:

11.1.1. That lineup spot becomes an **out** each time it appears

11.2. If removed due to injury:

11.2.1. Player may be removed without penalty

11.2.2. Player may **not** re-enter the game

12. TIE-BREAKER PROCEDURES

12.1. If tied after regulation:

12.1.1. **International Tie-Breaker (ITB)** begins immediately

12.1.2. Last completed at-bat starts on second base

13. EQUIPMENT & ON-FIELD RESTRICTIONS

13.1. Metal cleats prohibited in T, C, and B Leagues

13.2. Pitching machines are for T & C Leagues only

13.3. Only coaches may use communication devices in the dugout

13.4. Player phones must be silent and stored away

13.5. **Game Ball**

13.5.1. T League may play with a 10” T-ball or 11” softball

13.5.2. C League will play with 11” softball

13.5.3. A & B Leagues will play with 12” softball

13.6. The league will follow USA Softball: **Rule 2 – Playing Field** for game fields

14. CALL-UP PLAYER RULES (Gameplay Application)

14.1. Call-ups may be used to field a legal roster.

14.1.1. Must be on approved age-based list

14.1.2. Must have at least one year of experience

14.1.3. Must have parental permission

14.1.4. Used on a rotational basis

14.1.5. May wear their regular league jersey

14.1.6. Duplicate numbers allowed

15. SAFETY & WEATHER PROCEDURES

15.1. Weather decisions made by 5:00 PM

15.2. Weather delays capped at 30 minutes

15.3. Umpires may halt play for unsafe conditions

15.4. League not responsible for injuries; waivers required