

TRI COUNTY SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT ASSOCIATION
RULES AND PROCEDURES – 2009

1.0 TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

1.01 The Official name of the tournament shall be the “Tri County Softball Tournament”

1.02 Beginning in 2009, the host park sequence shall be:

1. South Gwinnett

2. Dacula
3. North Gwinnett (George Pierce)
4. Buford
5. Grayson
6. Lawrenceville
7. Norcross
8. Walton County
9. Auburn (currently a Tri County member but unable to host)
10. Shiloh
11. Peachtree Ridge
12. Mountain Park
13. Collins Hill
14. Hebron (unable to host)
15. Duluth
16. Brookwood
- 17. Mill Creek**

1.03 If any other park joins the Tri County Association, their names will be placed at the bottom of the rotation. If more than one (1) park joins at the same time, a coin flip or lottery will be held to determine placement of the new members.

A park may host the Slow (Tee Ball and Pee Wee) and Fast Pitch (all other age divisions), or either, in their turn. If they are unable to host both, that portion shall be offered to the Tri County Membership by lottery. Only those parks that have participated for one (1) or more years will be eligible for the lottery. If, for any reason, a park is unable to host the tournament during their turn (either slow or fast), they shall lose their turn and be placed at the bottom of the rotation.

1.04 The Director of Softball for the host park or his/her designee, shall serve as President of the Tri County Tournament Association. He or she will serve for one (1) year, during which their park hosts the tournament.

1.05 The Tri County Association will hold its annual meeting the **second Wednesday in January**. All rule changes, etc. shall be decided by majority vote of the park's participation in each years tournaments. Participation shall include, but not limited to, having a representative at each meeting concerning the tournament and two (2) consecutive years of Tri County Tournament play. Parks failing to participate in Tri County will be removed from the host park list. Each park shall cast one (1) vote. Any tie will be broken by the host park casting an additional vote.

1.06 The requirements for hosting the tournament shall be as follows:

- A. There must be at least five (5) lighted fields in condition for tournament play.
- B. Games will not be canceled due to bad weather earlier than three (3) hours prior to game time.
- C. Tournament to be held over at least an 8 day span. Individual age groups may take less based on number of teams entered.

1.07 The opening day's activities shall include the playing of the National Anthem prior to the first game.

1.08 Each team entered in the Tri County Tournament will have the opportunity to play a minimum of three games against other teams entered in the tournament.

- 1. Teams will play a three (3) game wrap between **seeded** teams in their respective age bracket.
- 2. Teams, based on their final place (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc...) in the Pre-Tri County Tournament will be seeded into the Tri County Tournament. The seeded teams will consist of the top ½ rounded up. (Example in a 9 team bracket only the top 5 teams from the Pre-Tri County Tournament will be seeded.) All other teams will be selected randomly.

SEEDING and BYES

Seeding is a method by which teams are distributed within a bracket. For example, in an 8-team bracket, the seeds would be grouped together in the first round as follows:

- 1
- 8

- 4
- 5

- 3
- 6

- 2
- 7

The logic behind this is that the higher seeded teams have earned their position from the Pre-Tri County Tournament games.

In larger brackets, this pattern is expanded. For example, in a 16-team bracket, the 1 seed plays the 16 seed, number 2 plays 15, and so on.

If there are blank spaces in a bracket due to having fewer teams, the higher seeds get what is called a "bye" in the first round. For example, if you have only 6 teams in an 8-team bracket, the #1 and #2 seeds advance to the second round.

3. Teams in the same age group from the same park will not play each other in the first round.
 4. The tournament director will post and distribute the brackets prior to the beginning of tournament play.
 5. Decisions of the tournament director on games are final.
- 1.09 The Host Park shall furnish a scorekeeper (age 16 or older) for each game. This is considered the OFFICIAL BOOK. In the event there is any question as to the score, location of runners or batting lineup, this is the OFFICIAL BOOK and the Umpire will look to this book and scorekeeper for any clarification. The scorekeeper shall sit in the scorekeeper's box. The HOST park shall provide an Official (15 Player) Scorebook to be used for the recording of all games. The Scorekeeper must enter the game data in this Official Scorebook. Each team shall furnish an adult scoreboard operator (18 or older). The scorekeepers shall be treated with the same respect as any other game official. The umpire may remove any fan displaying unsportsmanlike behavior towards a scorekeeper. Rosters should be on hand with the official book and shall only be inspected by an umpire or tournament director.
- 1.10 The use of any tobacco products is prohibited within the perimeter of the park's playing fields.
- 1.11 The entry fee for the Tri County Park will be \$225.00 for each team participating in the tournament. The entry fee for the Pre-Tri County will be \$175.00 for each team participating in this tournament.
- 1.12 The host park and/or sanctioning organization are not liable for any injuries which occur during tournament play. Each local league (park) must furnish their own insurance coverage.
- 1.13 A Team fee of \$175 per team for Tri County and \$175 per team for Pre-Tri County will be assessed in lieu of collecting gate fees. Teams will not be allowed to play in the Tri-County or Pre-Tri County tournament until the team fee has been paid to the host park.
- 1.14 Team trophies will be given by the host association for 1st and 2nd place. Trophies shall be a reasonable size, minimum 22" for 1st place and 18" for 2nd place. Individual trophies will be given to each girl on each division's first and second place teams. A trophy, medallion, or plaque may be given for sportsmanship awards. Each girl who participates in the tournament will receive a certificate stating that she is a member of an "ALL STAR" team.

- 1.15 The host park will designate a Tournament Umpire in Chief who will be responsible for distributing copies of the rules to the umpires assigned, reviewing the rules with the selected umpires, and ensuring compliance with these rules throughout the tournament.

If the host park is sharing responsibility for the slow or fast pitch tournament with another park, each park may choose the umpires for its portion of the tournament.

The host that provides the umpires shall pay for them.

- 1.16 Any call by an umpire that is solely a matter of judgement is final and not subject to protest. Only rule interpretation and player eligibility questions are subject to protest.
- 1.17 All protests concerning player eligibility or rule interpretation must be accompanied by a \$100.00 cash protest fee. This fee will be returned if the protest is upheld.
- 1.18 Player eligibility may be settled after a game if made during the game, but must be settled before the game if protested before the start of play. Furnishing of a birth certificate (original or copy) at time of protest shall be sufficient to rule a player eligible or not, if age of player is protested. Eligibility questions for other than age will be ruled by a majority vote of the Directors of the Parks participating in the tournament.
- 1.19 Rule interpretation protests will be made to the home plate umpire at the time of the occurrence, and before play is resumed. The home plate umpire will notify the official scorekeeper who will notify the Tournament Director or his designee. The protest committee will rule on the protest. The protest committee will be composed of three (3) members, including one (1) umpire not participating in the game, one (1) member of the host park, and (1) individual not associated with either team, chosen at random. All committee rulings are final.

2.0 PLAYER AND TEAM ELIGIBILITY

2.01 Each player's age shall be the age she was as of December 31st, the year before the Tournament. (Example: If the tournament is held in 2008 it would be the players age on December 31st, 2007, at 11:59:59 PM) This follows the ASA Rule book for a player's age.

2.02 The tournament shall be divided into the following age classifications:

Tee-Ball	6 years and younger
Pee-Wee	8 years and younger
Minor	10 years and younger
Major	12 years and younger
Junior	14 years and younger
Senior	18 years and younger

The 6U, 8U, 10U age groups shall further be divided into a Gold and Silver bracket. The Gold and Silver brackets are intended to promote competition between athletic associations of similar sizes. Associations with 4 or more teams in an age classification during the regular season **MUST** participate in the Gold bracket. Associations with 3 or fewer teams may participate in the Silver bracket; or may alternatively request to "play-up" in the Gold bracket. Teams may not play down.

2.03 Any player may play in a higher age classification, but may not play in a lower age group. Players may not play in more than one (1) age group during the tournament. Players must participate in the same age bracket in which they played during the regular recreational season. If a player has four (4) or more games in an older age bracket during the regular season, she will have to play in the older age level for the tournament.

2.04 Duplicate team rosters for the Pre Tri-County and the Tri-County tournaments must be submitted at the Player's Certification meeting. The roster will include the player's name, address, age, and date of birth. It shall also include the manager's name and 24 hour contact phone numbers. The Team Manager, his or her Softball Director, and the Tournament Director will sign the roster for each team. One (1) copy of the roster with all signatures will be returned to the manager, and One (1) copy will go to the Tournament Director. Late certification will NOT be allowed. All teams to provide Plate Umpire with line-up for each game.

2.05 Teams will be limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) players. Teams must bat their entire roster, not including alternates. Slow pitch (TB/PW) teams will be limited to a maximum of 12 defensive players. Fast pitch teams will be limited to a maximum of 10 defensive players.

2.06 Four (4) adults per team will be allowed in the dugout. In the Tee-Ball and Pee-Wee age groups, one (1) additional adult or assistant coach is permitted.

2.07 No player who resides in one league's district will be eligible to participate on another league's team unless she has written permission from the Director of the park in which she resides. This does not apply if she has played the entire regular season out of her district. A copy of this letter must be provided to the Tournament Director. All releases must be made before the certification meeting. Any team in violation of the above rule will be ineligible for all tournament play.

2.08 It is required that all teams entering the tournament be composed of "Recreational League" or "C" Level players who have participated in their respective park's regular season play. Travel teams and their members are ineligible to participate in the tournament. Participation on a church or college team is not considered travel team play provided that the team is composed of "C" level players.

Any player who has played on a park "Recreational League" team and three (3) or more tournament's roster spots, and/or "A" or "B" level league game's roster spots serving as a substitute of a travel team cannot participate in the Tri County Tournament. Park Recreational League teams may, however, play other park's "C" Level teams during the regular season without being considered a travel team.

Recreational League All Star teams or "C" Level teams cannot have played in more than two (2) tournaments prior to the Tri County Tournament.

It is up to the Director of each park to ensure that this rule is enforced. If an ineligible player participates in the Tri County Tournament, any game which the ineligible player was listed on the roster will be forfeited.

2.09 A player may not participate if she is pregnant.

2.10 Any girl who is eighteen (18) years or younger as of December 31st, the year before the Tournament. (Example: If the tournament is held in 2008 it would be the players' age on December 31st, 2007 at 11:59:59 PM) but who has graduated from High School or was enrolled in a school during the regular season, may still participate in the tournament.

2.11 All Star practice may not begin until the completion of the "Recreational League" season play. Failure to comply will result in tournament disqualification. Single teams in a recreational league age group who elect to play all stars are exempt.

3.0 EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

3.01 The host association(s) shall furnish ASA approved softballs for each division level as follows:

Tee-Ball, Pee-Wee, and Minor	11-inch, yellow-red stitch, .47 core, .375 compression
Major, Junior, Senior	12-inch, yellow-red stitch, .47 core, .375 compression

- 3.02 All players must wear shoes and numbered jerseys. Team jerseys shall be the same color. Two (2) players on the same team cannot wear the same number.
- 3.03 No player may wear metal cleats, jewelry, metal hair clips, or hair beads.
- 3.04 The wearing of caps or visors will be optional for each player, not each team. Players may not wear headbands in lieu of caps or visors. Plastic visors are not allowed.
- 3.05 Batters may not sling the bat as they swing at the pitch. Batters will be warned once, after which, they will be called out for slinging the bat. When a batter is called out for slinging the bat, an immediate dead ball will be called and all runners will be required to return to the base previously occupied at the time of the pitch.

3.06 All batters, including on deck batters and base runners in all age divisions, must wear a batting helmet with chinstrap. All age divisions are also required to have a facemask on all helmets. The facemask will be required to have the NOCSAE stamp on the facemask itself.

A team will be issued one (1) warning for the first violation. A second team violation will result in the player being declared out. A third team violation will result in the player being ejected from the game.

- 3.07 Tee-Ball and Pee-Wee catchers must wear an approved protective helmet and mask. It is strongly recommended, but not mandatory, that catchers also wear a chest protector.

All Fast Pitch division catchers must wear an approved helmet and mask with throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards.

6U, 8U, 10U pitchers must wear a face mask and heart (chest) protection.

4.0 PLAYING FIELD SPECIFICATIONS

<u>SLOW PITCH</u>	<u>BASE DISTANCE</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>
6 & Under	50 feet	25 feet
8 & Under	50 feet	28 feet
<u>FAST PITCH</u>	<u>BASE DISTANCE</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>
10 & Under	60 feet	35 feet
12 & Under	60 feet	40 feet
14 & Under	60 feet	40 feet
18 & Under	60 feet	40 feet

A 16-foot diameter circle will be drawn around the pitching rubber and used as outlined in the ASA Rule Book.

5.0 GENERAL PLAYING RULES

5.01 Slow Pitch Regulation Game

<u>AGE DIVISION</u>	<u>TIME LIMIT</u>	<u># INNINGS</u>	<u>RUN LIMIT</u>
6 & under	1 hr. 15 min.	5	5 runs first 4 Innings, 10 Runs 5 th and beyond
8 & Under	1 hr. 15 min.	6	5 Runs first 5 Innings, 10 Runs 6 th and beyond

The final inning of the game must be completed unless the home team is ahead at their time of bat.

Championship games will have no time limit; mercy rule still applies. (See 5.04)

5.02 Fast Pitch Regulation Game

<u>AGE DIVISION</u>	<u>TIME LIMIT</u>	<u># INNINGS</u>	<u>RUN LIMIT</u>
10 & Under	1 hr. 30 min.	6	3 Runs per Inning
12 & Under	1 hr. 30 min.	7	for first 3 innings;
14 & Under	1 hr. 30 min.	7	5 Runs 4 th inning
18 & Under	1 hr. 30 min.	7	& beyond

An inning may not begin after the time limit specified

Championship games will have no time limits; mercy rule still applies (see 5.04)

5.03 Fast Pitch Only – In the event of a tie after regulation time or innings, all extra innings will be played using the “International Tie Breaker” rule.

5.04 If, after half a slow pitch game has been played, any team is ahead by sixteen (16) or more runs, the game will be called. Half a game will be:

6 & Under	3 Innings
8 & Under	4 Innings

If, after half a fast pitch game has been played, any team is ahead by eleven (11) or more runs, the game will be called. Half a game will be:

10 & Under	4 Innings
12 & Under	5 Innings
14 & Under	5 Innings
18 & Under	5 Innings

5.04a In the event a game has to be called due to Rain or Inclement Weather at least half the game would have to be played to be considered a complete game. As in Rule 5.04 the following number of completed innings will determine if the game was a complete regulation game. If the game is called at some point beyond this point the winner of the game will be determined by the score of the last complete inning. Example: If a 6 & Under game was in the 5th inning and the game was called due to Rain or Inclement Weather the winner would be determined by the score at the end of the completed 4th inning.

6 & Under	3 Innings
8 & Under	4 Innings
10 & Under	4 Innings
12 & Under	5 Innings
14 & Under	5 Innings
18 & Under	5 Innings

ASA Rulebook reads: Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

- 5.05 Conferences will be limited to 3 per regulation game with 1 additional for extra innings.
- 5.06 The infield fly rule will not apply to the Tee-Ball, Pee-Wee, and Minor age divisions. It will however, apply to all other age groups.
- 5.07 Fast Pitch Only: Stealing will be allowed per ASA Rule Book.
- 5.08 Sliding to reach a base safely will be allowed for all age groups. Players will be called out for a head first slide.
- 5.09 At least eight (8) players are required to start a game. If a team has less than the required number of players available at the official start time (or within fifteen (15) minutes of the official start time of the first game scheduled for the day), the game will be forfeited. If a team begins a game with the required number of players, but loses a player due to injury or illness during the game, the game will not be forfeited.
- 5.10 An automatic out will be scored for any missing player(s) if a team plays with less than nine (9) players.
- 5.11 Unlimited defensive substitution will apply to all positions, except the pitcher's position which will be governed by ASA rules concerning removal and re-entry. It is the responsibility of each individual park to ensure that all players receive playing time per their own park's rules.
- 5.12 All players on the roster will bat in a rotating order. Any player who misses a turn at bat due to illness or injury will be out of the game. An offensive player, injured while a base runner, will be replaced by the offensive player making the last out. Batting order does not change for defensive substitutions. A maximum of ten (10) defensive players will be allowed for Minor age groups and up.

- 5.13 Weekday games may begin at 6:00 PM. Saturday games may begin at 8:00 AM. and Sunday games may be considered if rain-outs or other problems prevent adherence to the regular schedule.
- 5.14 Teams should plan to arrive thirty (30) minutes prior to their scheduled game time to allow for warm ups. NO on-field warm-ups will be permitted. Teams who are not ready to play at their scheduled start time will risk forfeiture of the game.
- 5.15 Tri County as of 2004 will adopt the rule that states: Use of a double first base will be mandatory.
- 5.16 Rules not specifically covered herein will automatically revert to the most recent ASA Rule Book.

6.0 6 & UNDER DIVISION RULES

- 6.01 A maximum of twelve (12) players can play defense
- 6.02 The playing field will be marked as follows:
- A. There will be a clearly visible mark halfway between the bases.
 - B. There will be a sixteen (16) foot diameter pitcher's circle drawn on the infield. The center of the circle will be a point thirty-six (36) feet from home plate on a direct line between home and second base.
 - C. The pitching mark will be placed twenty-five (25) feet from home plate on a direct line between home plate and second base.
 - D. A semi-circular foul line will be drawn ten (10) feet from home plate between the first and third base foul lines.
- 6.03 Batting – **Each team must designate 50% of their** batting lineup to only hit a pitched ball. Where a team has an odd number of batters the team must round up to the next whole number. [Example: 50% of 11 batters is 5.5 so this team would need to designate six (6) batters to hit a pitch only. A team with 13 batters would need to designate seven (7) batters.]
- 6.04 Rules for Batters with the Tee - Each batter will receive three (3) pitches from her adult coach. An additional offensive coach will be permitted behind home plate to catch the pitched balls and return them to the pitching coach. A batter will be entitled to a total of five (5) opportunities to place the ball into fair play, of which the first three (3) must be by pitch. If the batter fails to hit the ball into fair territory on any of these three (3) pitches, she will be allowed to hit from a tee. If after five (5) opportunities, the batter has not hit a fair ball, the batter will be called out. Any motion towards the ball on the tee with the bat will be considered a swing.
- 6.05 Rules for Batters without the Tee – Each batter will receive a total of five (5) pitches from her adult coach. Please note, the batter can swing at all 5 pitches and will only be

out when the 5th pitch is missed. Because we are requiring these batters to hit off the pitch, unlimited fouls will be allowed on the last pitch (5th pitch) to these batters only. These batters will be marked in the official score book with a letter **P** to note that player can only hit a pitched ball for the entire game. You can not change who these players are once the first pitch is made to their team. If any injury or illness occurs to one of these players the team is not required to designate another pitch only batter.

- 6.06 If the ball stops inside the ten (10) foot area in front of home plate, it is a foul ball. If the ball is touched by a defensive player inside the ten (10) foot area, whether moving or not, it is foul.
- 6.07 If the ball is hit, the coach who is pitching must immediately exit the playing field so as not to interfere with the defense and the umpire's line of sight. If the batted ball hits the pitching coach, the ball is dead and the batter must bat again without receiving penalty for a swing.
- 6.08 If the batter must hit from the tee, an offensive coach will adjust the tee for the batter, then move to the fence or backstop behind home plate. When the ball is hit off the tee, the coach will immediately remove the tee and bat.
- 6.09 Coaches will not be allowed to place the batter or tee in such a manner that will dictate the direction of the batted ball.
- 6.10 If the base runner is past the halfway mark between the bases when time is called, the base runner will be awarded the next base. If the base runner is not past the halfway mark, she must return to the base last touched.
- 6.11 There are no walks in this age division.
- 6.12 When a coach is pitching, the defensive player pitcher may stand anywhere within or directly behind the sixteen (16) foot pitching circle. Directly behind is defined as if there were two parallel lines running from the outside of the pitching circle and continuing toward the outfield. The player pitcher can stand anywhere between these two imaginary lines behind the pitching circle. She is the only player allowed in the circle prior to the ball being pitched.**
- 6.13 No more than seven (7) defensive players will be allowed on the infield prior to the ball being hit. No defensive player on the infield may stand closer to the batter than the player pitcher.
- 6.14 Two (2) defensive coaches will be allowed in the outfield at all times. They can not touch the ball or enter the infield playing area. If a coach touches or is struck by a ball, or enters the infield, the base runners will be awarded an additional base after play has been stopped.
- 6.15 When a ball is in play, the umpire will call time out when either a) the player pitcher has full control of the ball and is inside the pitcher's circle with both feet; or b) when in the

judgement of the umpire, all runners have stopped advancing. If the player pitcher is attempting to make a play and runs through the circle, the umpire will not call time.

- 6.16 If a player hits a fly ball to the player pitcher and she catches it, it will be the umpire's judgement whether to call time.
- 6.17 Any time players remain in jeopardy of being put out, umpires have the authority to not call time.
- 6.18 If the batter hits a ground ball that is fielded by the player pitcher inside the circle and she makes no attempt to make a play at first, the batter will advance to first base. No other runners may advance unless forced.
- 6.19 Defensive players may not intentionally ground or roll the ball. The ball must be thrown overhand during live ball play. The umpire will not honor outs made by intentionally grounded or rolled balls.
- 6.20 One (1) defensive coach will be allowed outside the dugout within arm's length of the dugout area.
- 6.21 The initial play from the pitcher to first base MUST be an overhand throw UNLESS IN THE JUDGEMENT OF THE UMPIRE her natural motion to field the ball took her out of the circle.

7.0 8 & UNDER DIVISION RULES

- 7.01 A maximum of twelve (12) players can play defense.
- 7.02 The playing field will be clearly marked as follows:
 - A. There will be a clearly visible mark halfway between the bases.
 - B. There will be a sixteen (16) foot diameter pitcher's circle drawn on the infield. The center of the circle will be a point thirty-six (36) feet from home plate on a direct line between home plate and second base
 - C. The pitching mark will be placed twenty-eight (28) feet from home plate on a direct line between home plate and second base. The pitching mark shall be no greater than two (2) feet in width.
- 7.03 Each batter will receive a total of five (5) pitches or three (3) strikes from her adult coach. A foul ball will be considered a strike unless it is the third strike in which case the batter receives an additional pitch. A batter will not be called out on strikes as long as she is fouling the ball.

- 7.04 If the ball is hit, the coach who is pitching must immediately exit the playing field so as not to interfere with the defense and the umpire's line of sight. If the batted ball hits the pitching coach, the ball is called dead, and the batter must bat again.
- 7.05 If a base runner is past the halfway mark between the bases when time is called, the base runner is awarded the next base. If the base runner is not halfway, she must return to the last touched base.
- 7.06 There are no walks in this age division.
- 7.07 When a coach is pitching, the defensive player pitcher may stand anywhere within or directly behind the sixteen (16) foot pitching circle. Directly behind is defined as if there were two parallel lines running from the outside of the pitching circle and continuing toward the outfield. The player pitcher can stand anywhere between these two imaginary lines behind the pitching circle. She is the only player allowed in the circle prior to the ball being pitched.**
- 7.08 No more than seven (7) defensive players will be allowed on the infield (including the catcher) prior to the ball being hit. No defensive player on the infield may stand closer to the batter than the player pitcher.
- 7.09 When the ball is in play, the umpire will call time when either a) the player pitcher has full control of the ball and is inside the pitcher's circle with both feet; or b) when, in the judgement of the umpire, all runners have stopped advancing. If the player pitcher is attempting to make a play and runs through the circle, the umpire will not call time.
- 7.10 Any time players remain in jeopardy of being put out; umpires have the authority of not calling time.
- 7.11 If a player hits a fly ball to the player/pitcher and she catches it, it will be the umpire's judgement to call time.
- 7.12 If the batter hits a ground ball, which is fielded by the player pitcher inside the circle, and she makes no attempt to make a play at first, the batter will advance to first base. No other runners may advance unless forced.
- 7.13 One (1) defensive coach is allowed outside the dugout within arm's length of the dugout area. No coach will be allowed inside the lines of fair play during defensive play.
- 7.14 Defensive players may not intentionally ground or roll the ball. The ball must be thrown overhand during live ball play. The umpire will not honor outs made by intentionally grounding or rolling the ball.

8.0 10 & UNDER DIVISION RULES

- 8.01 Stealing of home is allowed. Whether passed ball or delayed.**
- 8.02 One base is allowed per pitch per runner on a steal**

- 8.03 Drop Third Strike Rule is not in effect**
- 8.04 There is no infield Fly Rule**