

BAJA ARIZONA GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

VAIL FAST PITCH GIRLS SOFTBALL

OFFICIAL 2019 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(Baja Revision 3.0)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Registration	page 3
II. Specific Request Rule	page 4
III. Playing Up/Down	page 5
IV. Late Registration	page 5
V. Player Evaluation	page 5
VI. Team Selection	page 6
VII. Practice and Game Guidelines	page 7 & 8
VIII. Team Equipment	page 8
IX. Uniforms	page 9
X. Scorebooks	page 9
XI. Safety Rules	page 9
XII. Sportsmanship	page 10
XIII. Parent Participation	page 10
XIV. Insurance	page 10
XV. Incident Reports	page 10
XVI. Code of Conduct	page 10

I. REGISTRATION

Registration is open to girls ages 4.5 - 14. Registration will be available online. Sign-up dates will be set and announced by the league. Teams must be formed by a cutoff date to ensure a game schedule may be promulgated before the start of the season.

A. Registration Fees:

Registration fees, as set by the league, shall accompany each registration before a player is permitted to participate. A copy of player's certified birth certificate and proof of residence must also accompany each registration form.

B. No Refunds:

Vail Fast Pitch Girls Softball has a zero refund policy. No refunds will be issued for any reason at any time because the league relies on registration fees to cover player costs. Funds received from registration are allocated and dispersed immediately after registering.

C. Player Family Volunteer Hours:

Family members may be asked to volunteer to help with league activities. Coaching, managing, team parents, etc. are vital volunteer roles that the league depends on for the success of all players. Each team may also be asked to work at least one day to clean the fields during the season.

D. Player Age Determination:

At the time of registration, the league shall have the responsibility of determining player age and qualifications for each division by way of verification of date of birth. A copy of player's birth certificate must accompany each registration form for a new player to the league or any returning player in question.

E. Player Age/Division Assignment:

Registration is open to all girls ages 4.5 - 14. The league will be broken into divisions based on date of birth. The following is a list of division/age requirements:

1. 6U Division - Consists of players aged four and a half (4½) through (6) years old as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
2. 8U Division - Consists of players eight (8) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
3. 10U Division - Consists of players ten (10) years or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
4. 12U Division - Consists of players twelve (12) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
5. 14U Division - Consists of players fourteen (14) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.

II. SPECIFIC REQUEST RULE

1. 6U Division:

Players in the 6U division may request the teammates with whom they want to play i.e., players may request a specific coach, team, and/or teammate.

Note: All requests will be taken into consideration, but are not guaranteed.

2. 8U – 14U divisions:

Beginning at the 8U level, our philosophy is to establish balanced teams so that softball games will be competitive among teams in each division. Players in the 8U through 14U divisions may request to be teamed with a “team buddy” as described below, or they may request to play for their previous season coach. It is not a guarantee that players will be placed with their team buddy or with their previous coach, but we will do our best to accommodate such requests. Beyond that, teams are created based on a process which strives for a balance of experience/skill on each team within a given division. The process considers age, years of experience, All-Star experience, experience at designated positions (pitcher, catcher), and other considerations that the Board deems necessary in order to achieve team balance. For this reason, not all “team buddies” may end up together on teams.

(a) Buddy Request:

Any player may select one other player as a buddy, provided their buddy selects them also, and that the buddying does not pair up a returning age-level All-Star pitcher with another pitcher, unless the pairing up of the two pitchers has no effect on the competitive balance of the teams.

(b) Staffing Request:

To encourage parent volunteerism and to promote harmony on the team staff, staff members may request to team up provided they bring no more than 3 players into the draw. The league must evaluate and approve any staffing requests to ensure that competitive balance is maintained. Any players that the staff members bring are referred to as “reserved players”. Examples of this include three staff members with one player each, or two staff members - one with one player, and the other with two players (e.g. two sisters, or a daughter and her buddy). If it is at the league's discretion that staff members are placed together, the staff members' players would not be considered "reserved players" and those staff members would only be held to the buddy rule as stated in paragraph 2a.

III. PLAYING UP/DOWN

Players may opt to play up or down one age division. The league must be notified at the time of registration and it will be indicated on the registration form. It may also be necessary, in order to fill out teams or coaching positions in an upper division, to allow a small number of qualified players to be moved to a more advanced division. **Players playing up a division are eligible for All-Star consideration in the division in which they played; players playing down a division are not eligible for All-Star consideration.**

1. Playing Up:

Placement in an upper division requires that the following criteria be met:

- (a) Player must have the signed permission of the parent or guardian to include acknowledgement of All-Star restrictions, if any.
- (b) Player must have the consent of the league.

2. Playing Down:

It may be necessary, due to safety or coaching considerations, to allow players lacking sufficient softball experience to be placed in a lower age division. Placement in a lower division requires that the following criteria be met:

- (a) Player must have the signed permission of the parent or guardian, to include acknowledgement of All-Star ineligibility.
- (b) Player must be within one year of the lower division in which they are to play.
- (c) Player must have the consent of the league.

IV. LATE REGISTRATION

The league will place players that register after the team selection process on teams based on the player's known abilities, personal development, team needs and equality of teams within the division. Any new player that has not been assessed cannot be drafted and will be randomly selected and placed on a team.

V. PLAYER EVALUATION

With the exception of the 6U division, the league will conduct player evaluations for each division to determine how to rank players and form balanced teams. After the league has evaluated and ranked their players, every effort will be made to ensure teams are balanced with an equal number of inexperienced, experienced, and highly experienced players.

VI. TEAM SELECTION:

With the exception of the 6U Division, teams will consist of a minimum of 9 players. The number of teams will be determined by the league, taking into consideration the number of players registered for each division. The 6U teams will be formed so as to ensure an equal number of players on each team. The remaining division teams will be formed by way of a divisional draft or draw process, separately conducted for each division, with the ultimate goal of providing an evenly competitive division of teams. Many players make special requests for various reasons regarding team placement; all requests will be considered but are not guaranteed.

(a) 6U Division:

Teams in the 6U Division will be formed by the league on a random basis taking into consideration "buddy requests" or fully formed teams. (The main objective in the 6U Division is that the players have fun and learn the basic rules of the game.)

(b) 8U-14U Divisions:

Prior to creating the teams, the league will have all the registration forms for all the players sorted into categories (pitchers, catchers, returning, All-Stars, etc.) and ranked by the players' ability and age. So as to keep teams as evenly balanced as possible, each team will have no more than three players that can be "reserved" players. These "reserved" players are automatically placed on any given team prior to the team selection. In the case of coaches having more than one daughter on a team, exceptions can be made as long as it does not affect the overall balance of the teams.

1. Pitchers:

Because pitchers are essential to the game and have a tremendous impact on the competitiveness of a team, an even distribution of pitchers among teams in the division is critical. The league will rank the pitchers to the best of their abilities. The league may choose to hold pre-season pitching evaluations if needed to help with rankings.

2. Manager/Coach/Reserved Player:

A reserved player is a player brought on to the team as a result of a requested pairing of staff members. The pairing of staff members is subject to league approval and "reserved" players are ranked in ability order as determined by the league.

3. Relatives:

Relatives playing within the same division shall be treated as buddies and will be placed on the same team, unless otherwise requested by the parents or guardians.

VII. PRACTICE AND GAME GUIDELINES

A. Practice Guidelines

1. No more than (4) games/practices may be conducted in a calendar week during the spring and fall seasons. This rule may be waived at each leagues' discretion during the All-Star season.
2. No player shall be left unattended at the field/practice area, however, transportation of each player is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

B. Game Guidelines

1. **Player Locations:** All players must remain inside the playing field/dugout during the course of the game with the exception of warming up players and restroom breaks with the permission of the manager/coaches.
2. **Early Departure of a Player:** If a player departs the game early, the opposing team staff, the umpire, and the official scorekeepers must first be notified.
3. **Substitute Registered Coach:**
On occasion, a substitute registered coach will fill in for a registered coach's absence.
4. **Protests:** Protests must be noted in the official scorebook by both team scorekeepers and the Umpire. All protests must be submitted in writing to the Umpire-in-Chief within 24 hours of the end of the game. Protests decisions will be made by the Umpire-in-Chief and the league within one week of the protested game. If the protest is upheld, the game will be rescheduled as soon as possible. It is important that the Scorekeeper notes the following: the time; the inning; and the player at bat at the time of protest. For further information, refer to the USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2017.

C. **Game Forfeiture/Time Outs:** See Division Rules.

D. **Termination of Games:** See USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2017.

E. **Staff Ejections:** In the event a staff member is ejected from the game by an Umpire, the staff member will be required to leave the playing area. A special board meeting will be held within four days of the occurrence to determine if any disciplinary action will be administered. The staff member will be suspended from Baja activities pending any board action and the Executive Board will be notified.

F. **Injuries:** Any player injury sustained during any team activity must be reported within 24 hours to the league along with all necessary paperwork.

LEAGUE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND REGULATIONS, continued

G. Make-Up/Rescheduled Games: Staff will work together along with the Umpire-In-Chief to re-schedule games. If a team cannot field players and both team staff members agree to reschedule the game and by the end of the season, the game cannot be played, the team requesting the rescheduled game will take the loss.

H. Maintaining/Signing the Official Scorebook: Staff are responsible for assuring there is an official scorekeeper for the game; ensuring opposing team staff and the Umpire are provided official line-ups at least 5 minutes prior to game time; signing the official scorebook at the end of the game; and returning it to the designated area following the game.

I. Substitution and Batting Line-up: Each team is responsible for providing the official batting line-up and substitution plan to the opposing team and the umpire at least 5 minutes prior to the game. The substitution and batting line-up will provide the batting order as well as the jersey numbers of the players who will be on the bench each inning.

J. An Umpire's Failure to Appear: If an Umpire fails to appear before game time, staff from both teams can appoint a substitute to stand in with the appropriate gear.

VIII. TEAM EQUIPMENT:

Vail Fast Pitch will issue team equipment to each Head Coach. The Head Coach will be responsible for keeping track of, using, cleaning & upkeep, and returning all issued equipment.

6U players are required to provide their own glove and water bottle. Softball cleats are recommended, but not required.

8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U players are required to provide their own glove, softball cleats (no metal spikes), fielder's face mask, and water bottle.

1. Players must wear protective helmets at all times while batting or running bases. Helmets must have ASA approved face mask and chin straps. This rule applies to all age groups including 6U.
2. 8U - 14U: Infielders must wear fielder's face masks during practice and games.
3. Catchers must wear a protective mask when warming up pitchers and all protective catcher's gear while catching on the playing field.
4. Only ASA approved equipment will be permitted.
5. Players may wear protective gear when sliding, however sliding gear is not required.
6. No jewelry may be worn by players during practices or games and hair must be secured away from player's faces.

IX. UNIFORMS

With each 8U - 14U registration, the league will supply each player with a full game uniform consisting of shirt, pants or shorts, and socks. 6U players will receive a game shirt only. Each player will be able to keep their uniform after the season ends.

Players are not permitted to wear any jewelry to practices or games. Including, but not limited to, belly rings, bracelets, earrings, nose rings, watches, etc. Hair must be secured away from player's faces. Matching team visors or caps may be worn on the playing field.

X. SCOREBOOKS:

The Head Coach is responsible for keeping track of the scorebook. The Head Coach will keep the scorebook with the team equipment so that it is available for all games. For the 8U-14U divisions, Head Coach will provide the scorebook to the team's scorekeeper for each game. Head Coach must sign the official scorebook following each game.

XI. SAFETY RULES

1. Adults and minors who are not registered players, league officials, or team volunteer staff members, and that have not completed the background check process through Vail Fast Pitch, are not allowed on the field or in the dugout during games. This includes player's siblings and coach's children that are not playing on that team.
2. Each team must have a female adult Manager and one other female adult team volunteer on staff (only one needs to present at team events).
3. All events, practices, and games, must be attended and monitored by a minimum of two adults that are (21+) or one adult (21+) and one young adult (18+). At least one of those adults must be female. All must be rostered & approved volunteers.
4. Adults must have a full, clear view of the event and dugout at all times.
5. One female rostered volunteer must be present during games for each team.
6. Players must remain in the dugout or on the field during the game. If a player must leave the playing area or dugout, the player's parent(s) must accompany her.
7. No youth (player, sibling, or friend) is to remain at an event without an adult. One on one contact between adults and youth is not permitted. Personal conferences must be in view of other adults.
8. All team rostered volunteers must ensure that players use proper protection, i.e. helmets, catching gear, etc., and that they are supervised during activities.
9. Coaching staff must inspect the fields prior to each practice and game for safety hazards such as broken glass, nails, holes, etc.
10. Each team must have one first aid kit stocked and present at each team practice and game.
11. Fielder's face masks are mandatory for all players in the 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U divisions. Each player will be responsible for providing their own mask.

XII. SPORTSMANSHIP

The league supports all positive sportsmanship actions and does not allow any unsportsmanlike actions. Negative comments and bullying are NOT ALLOWED in Vail Fast Pitch.

Rules For Spectators:

- (a) Spectators may not coach players. This includes, but is not limited to parents, batters, and pitchers from behind the backstop or any other area. Doing so can result in an automatic out being assessed to the team.
- (b) Spectators are not allowed to heckle the coaches, players, or the umpires at any Vail Fast Pitch softball activity.
- (c) Spectators will never belittle the efforts of the players. Spectators are urged to support the player's efforts by making encouraging remarks and applauding enthusiastically.
- (d) Spectators will stay away from the team dugouts and will not talk to players or managing personnel involved in the game.
- (e) Spectators will remain behind fences and "out of play" lines to prevent possible spectator interference and/or player injury.
- (f) Spectators will return all balls hit or thrown into the stands to the closest dugout unless directed to return the ball to the field by the game umpires.

XIII. PARENT PARTICIPATION

Safety is of the utmost importance in regards to working with the youth of Vail Fast Pitch. For the protection of all players, it is mandatory that each adult league member or volunteer, age 18 or over that is interested in volunteering to work with a team, have a completed criminal background check form on file prior to participation. Upon completion of cleared background checks, those volunteers will be known as rostered volunteers. Background checks will be good for one (1) year.

XIV. INSURANCE

Insurance information is available by contacting the league. All players must have a birth certificate on file with the league for age verification and insurance coverage.

XV. INCIDENT REPORTS:

If a player is injured during a practice or game, there is a sportsmanship issue, a player or coach has been ejected, or there is a significant parent issue; the head coach should fill out an incident report and submit it to the President or Vice President of the league. Copies of the form can be found at vailfastpitch.com. Please contact the President of the League within 24 hours of any incident.

XVI. CODE OF CONDUCT

Prior to the beginning of each season every parent/guardian is required to sign the Code of Conduct as part of the player registration process. The league is required to keep the Code of Conduct Forms on file throughout the season. A Code of Conduct Form may be found at vailfastpitch.com.