# 2026 FFC Softball Rules

*General leagues • Thursday Senior League follows separate rules*

## League administration & schedules

Florida First Coast Softball, Inc. (FFC) may refuse an entry or place a team in a higher or lower classification, with or without the agreement of league managers, in the interest of balanced competition and sports promotion. No team is guaranteed a particular complex, field, or playing time.

FFC reserves the right to move games from Drew Park to Ringhaver Park when scheduling conflicts occur. Coaches must follow the current published schedule and any subsequent field or time updates.

### Manager responsibilities

- Ensure every player is at least 18 years old, knows the rules, and has signed the Waiver, Release of Liability, and Indemnification Agreement roster.
- Control the conduct of players and fans. Managers are responsible for their team's unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Provide a valid email address. Official FFC correspondence is sent by email; coaches are responsible for sharing updates with their players.
- Check the schedule before every game and record any makeup-game information received from FFC. A team that is not ready to start on time forfeits the game.

## Season length & game times

Each team will play approximately 10 to 12 games during the season, depending on the number of teams in the league and weather conditions permitting. Sunday and other one-night-a-week leagues will play 6 to 8 games during the season weather conditions permitting.

The standard game times for each league are listed below. Coaches must check their published schedule and any subsequent FFC updates for their assigned games, fields, and time changes. Doubleheaders may be added to make up canceled games.

| League / day | Game times |
|---|---|
| Sunday Morning | 8:00 a.m., 9:05 a.m., 10:10 a.m., 11:15 a.m. |
| Sunday Evening | 3:45 p.m., 4:50 p.m., 5:55 p.m., 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday Men | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |
| Tuesday Men | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |
| Tuesday Women | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |
| Wednesday Upper | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |
| Wednesday Lower | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |
| Thursday Men | 6:45 p.m., 7:50 p.m., 8:55 p.m. |

Games have a 60-minute time limit. When time expires, the game is over.

# Rosters, eligibility & division placement

## Season rosters

A completed roster must be turned in at the first game of each season. Each player must sign the Waiver, Release of Liability, and Indemnification Agreement. Wet signatures are required. A roster must be submitted each season for the team to be eligible for the end-of-season tournament.

## Adding or dropping players

Add/drop forms are available in the score box/score booth at Drew Park. Complete the form in full and obtain both the coach's and player's signatures. Submit the signed form to the scorekeeper box before the first game in which the change is to take effect.

All roster additions and drops, including changes for Metro eligibility, must be submitted before the last league game ends.

## Metro eligibility

- Only rostered players may participate in the end-of-season tournament. Teams without a completed, submitted roster are ineligible.
- A player may participate in only one Men's end-of-season tournament per season.
- Coaches must respond IN or OUT when FFC requests confirmation of Metro participation.

## Moving from Lower to Upper

For Sunday and Wednesday Coed, both the Lower regular-season champion and the Lower Metro champion must move to Upper for the following season. A team must play at least one season in Upper. If it finishes that season below .500, it may request to return to Lower the following season.

## Refunds

Once schedules have been completed and published, no refunds will be processed because of a facility, field, or game-time assignment. A $30 administration fee applies to all refunds processed.

# Officials, payments & conduct

Each game is assigned one scorekeeper. FFC strives to provide two umpires when staffing permits. Umpire complaints must be submitted in writing to Mike@ffcsoftball.com.

## Officials fees — per team, per game

| League | Umpires | Scorekeeper | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday Coed | $16 | $7 | $23 |
| Monday Men | $24 | $7 | $31 |
| Tuesday Women | $16 | $7 | $23 |
| Tuesday Men | $24 | $7 | $31 |
| Wednesday Coed — Upper & Lower | $24 | $7 | $31 |
| Thursday Men | $24 | $7 | $31 |

Fees are cash only and must be paid before each game. Personal checks are not accepted. Bring the exact amount. Failure to pay the umpire or scorekeeper before the game results in a forfeit. Fees may change with written notification.

## Forfeits & outstanding balances

Three forfeits result in expulsion from league play. Outstanding forfeit fees and prior balances must be paid before Metro participation or future registration. The applicable forfeit charge and any additional payment deadline must be confirmed; see administrative review.

## Sportsmanship & discipline

Racial slurs, threats, attempted fighting, and abusive conduct toward players, officials, staff, or spectators are prohibited. Managers are responsible for players and fans. FFC may review reported incidents and issue warnings or suspensions, including when an incident did not result in an on-field ejection.

An umpire ejection carries these penalties: first offense — a two-week suspension and 12 months of probation; a second ejection during that probation — a three-month suspension. If an ejected player cannot be replaced by a legal substitute, the game is forfeited.

No smoking of any kind, vaping, or cigars is allowed inside the park. Umpires have authority to eject a player for a violation. If the team has no legal substitute, the game is forfeited. No sunflower seeds are allowed on the fields.

# Equipment, pitching & batting

## Approved equipment

- No metal cleats.
- Bats must carry a 220 or 240 USSSA stamp. Banned bats are not allowed.
- Only FFC-stamped softballs purchased from the concession stand may be used in league games. The listed prices are $8 per ball or $85 per dozen.

## Pitching & the screen

- Batters begin with a 1-ball, 1-strike count. There is no courtesy foul. Hitting the pitching screen/net is a foul; hitting it with two strikes results in an out.
- The pitching screen must cover half of the pitching rubber.
- Pitchers may not be the first player to make a play on a live ball. This includes catching a fly ball or making a play on a slow grounder. If the pitcher is first to touch a live ball, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base.
- Pitch height is 6–10 feet from the ground. The pitcher must toe the rubber. Pump faking is allowed.

## Strike mat & batter’s box

A strike mat is used in all leagues covered by these rules. A legally pitched ball that is not swung at and lands on any part of the plate or mat is a strike.

A batter must have some part of both feet touching the batter’s box. When making contact, the batter’s back foot cannot be in front of the plate. A batter who steps in front of or on the plate/mat is out.

## Home-run limits

The following home-run limits apply to the listed leagues. Limits may change from season to season and are also listed on published schedules. Women's home runs in Coed count toward the team's home-run total.

| League / division | Home-run limit and penalty |
|---|---|
| Sunday Morning | 2, then an out |
| Sunday Evening | 2, then an out |
| Monday Men | 3, then an inning-ending out |
| Tuesday Men | 5, then an out |
| Tuesday Women | 3, then an out |
| Wednesday Upper | 3, then an out |
| Wednesday Lower | 3, then an out |
| Thursday Men | 3, then an inning-ending out |

# Baserunning & lineups

## Safety bases & runners

At first base, the runner must use the safety bag when there is a play at first; using the wrong bag results in an out. On an initial force-out attempt that pulls the defense off first base into foul ground, the defense and runner may use either the white or orange portion for safety.

Runners must touch the safety plate at home. All plays at home are force plays: the catcher must catch the ball at home before the runner touches the safety plate for an out. No tagging or sliding at home. Once a runner passes the commitment line, the runner cannot return to third base.

Runners may stand off the base if requested, but must retouch the base before advancing. One courtesy runner per inning is allowed; in Coed, one per gender per inning is allowed. The courtesy runner must be in the lineup or be a legal substitute. If that runner is due to bat, the original player may return to the bases to run for themselves.

## Men's & Coed lineups

Men's teams may bat up to 12 players in the starting lineup.

| Division | Permitted full starting lineups | Batting-order restriction |
|---|---|---|
| Wednesday Coed | 6 men / 4 women<br>6 men / 5 women<br>7 men / 5 women | No consecutive women; no three consecutive men. |
| Sunday Coed | 7 men / 3 women<br>8 men / 3 women<br>8 men / 4 women | No consecutive women; no five consecutive men. |

Wednesday Coed must field four women; Sunday Coed must field three. Exception: either may start with nine players when short one man or woman, taking an out in that lineup spot. On Sundays, a team short its third woman may bat only nine players (7 men/2 women), increasing to 10 if that woman arrives late. It cannot bat an extra man while missing the third woman.

If a player cannot continue due to injury and no substitute is available, the game is not automatically forfeited; an out is taken each time that player is due to bat. An ejection requires a legal substitute for the game to continue.

## Coed defensive positioning

When a woman bats, all infielders must be on the brown turf or infield dirt at Ringhaver, and all four outfielders must be behind the 200-foot line. A positioning violation awards the batter first base.

# Rainouts, completed games & Metro

## Rainout notifications & decisions

FFC will attempt to notify teams as soon as a cancellation decision is made. Emails will be sent to coaches. Coaches are responsible for passing the information to their players.

When rain is in the immediate forecast, umpires will discuss with coaches at the pregame meeting whether to attempt to play. If the game starts, umpires are authorized to keep their payment. If both coaches decide not to play, umpires are not paid and no game is played.

If active rain occurs after the first games begin, umpires must wait 10 minutes to see whether the rain stops. If torrential rain quickly causes standing water in the outfields, games may be called before the 10-minute wait ends.

## Official rain-shortened game

A game stopped because of rain is considered an official game after four completed innings, or after three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead.

A game stopped because of rain before the official-game threshold will be made up and restarted from the beginning.

## Makeup games

FFC may add doubleheaders or change game dates, times, or fields to make up canceled games. Coaches must check revised schedules and record all makeup-game information received.

## Standings & Metro seeding

If teams are tied in the standings, the first tiebreaker is head-to-head results: the team that won the head-to-head matchup ranks higher. If the tie remains, the next tiebreaker is total runs scored across all league games: the team with the most runs scored ranks higher. If the tie still remains, the next tie breaker is runs scored against.

## Metro Tournament Protests

A protest concerning a player who is not listed on the team's roster must be made during the game. If the protest is upheld, the player will be ejected, and the team must have a legal substitute available to continue playing.

A $100 protest fee is required. If the protest is denied, the fee is non-refundable.

*FFC reserves the right to use our discretion when applying this rule.*

## Metro Affected by Repeated Rainouts

If Metro cannot continue because of rain, FFC will use the final regular season standings at that time to determine the final placement.