

AAYSA SOFTBALL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Section 1: Purpose, Scope, and Authority

1.1 Purpose and Scope

- This document establishes policies and procedures specific to the Aubrey Area Youth Softball Association (AAYSA) Softball program. These policies operate as a sport-specific sub-document to the AAYSA bylaws, and board policies and are intended to supplement, not replace, those governing documents.

1.2 Mission Alignment

- The AAYSA Softball program is committed to providing a safe, positive, and inclusive environment that promotes skill development, teamwork, sportsmanship, and community engagement, consistent with the mission of AAYSA.

Section 2: Governance and Chain of Command

2.1 Executive Board Oversight

- The AAYSA Executive Board provides governance and oversight of the softball program and retains ultimate authority over policy approval, disciplinary appeals, and organizational compliance.
- All coaches, volunteers, players, parents, and spectators must comply with AAYSA policies and all NTX Interlock rules, policies, and regulations.

2.2 NTX Interlock Representation

- The NTX Interlock regulates games and competitions between softball organizations in North Texas to ensure fair play and consistency across leagues.
- AAYSA has two members serving on the NTX Interlock board to represent our league, promote fairness, and support adherence to inter-organizational policies.
- All league participants and volunteers are expected to follow NTX Interlock regulations in addition to AAYSA policies.

2.3 Softball Commissioner Authority

- The Softball Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of the AAYSA Softball program, including rules enforcement, scheduling, safety oversight, team operations, and discipline.
- The Commissioner operates under the authority of the Executive Board and reports directly to the Board.
- The Softball Commissioner has the authority to appoint a softball sub-board, committee members, and designate volunteers as needed at any time to support the effective operation of the softball program.

Section 3: Registration, Eligibility, and Play-Up Rules

3.1 Registration and Eligibility

- All players must be properly registered with AAYSA and meet applicable age and residency requirements. Player eligibility, age divisions, and participation rules are governed by NTX Interlock, of which AAYSA is a participating member organization.

3.2 Play-Up Limitations

- Players are generally expected to play in their own age division.
- Players may only “play up” one age division and **playing up more than one age division is strictly prohibited.**
- Players in divisions below 8U may only play up with Commissioner approval.
- All players must meet the applicable age cut-off for the division they are playing in.
- Safety and developmental readiness take priority over all play-up requests. The Commissioner’s decision is final.

Section 4: Background Checks and Volunteer Requirements

4.1 Background Checks

- All coaches and volunteers are required to successfully complete an annual background check through their home organization.

4.2 Training and Certification

- Coaches and volunteers must comply with NTX Interlock Codes of Conduct and complete any required training or certifications designated within the NAYS portfolio.

Section 5: Team Formation and Rosters

5.1 Roster Creation

- Teams are formed strictly by age division. The Commissioner is responsible for creating all team rosters. Coaches may not request specific players.

5.2 Requests and Assignments

- While families may submit requests to play with friends or specific coaches, these requests are not guaranteed. Coach assignments are not guaranteed.

5.3 Codes of Conduct

- Parents and guardians must adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct. Coaches must adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct. These documents are provided at time of registration. If not signed by participating coach but by a spouse or 3rd party, the Commissioner will request a physically signed Coaches Code of Conduct. Copies of these documents are available upon request.

5.4 Player Safety Requirements

- Players must wear all required safety equipment during practices, consistent with game-day requirements.

Section 6: Safety Equipment

6.1 Required Equipment

- Required safety equipment includes: - Batting helmets with face masks for all batters and runners - Full protective catching gear for catchers - Protective face masks for pitchers
- Failure to comply with safety equipment requirements may result in removal from play.

6.2 Recommended Equipment

- Protective face masks are strongly recommended for all infielders, regardless of age division, to enhance player safety.

Section 7: Practice, Facilities, and Field Use

7.1 Approved Fields

- Practices may only be held on AAYSA-approved fields and during scheduled time slots.

7.2 Unauthorized Use

- Unauthorized use of fields, including unapproved practices or entering the field outside of assigned times, is strictly prohibited and may jeopardize AAYSA's access to facilities.

7.3 Access Control

- Sharing of gate or access codes is strictly prohibited and limited to head coaches or other board-approved personnel.

7.4 Motorized Vehicles and Equipment Use

- The use of Gators, utility vehicles, golf carts, or any other motorized vehicles is strictly prohibited without prior approval from the AAYSA Executive Board or designated Commissioner. Only approved adults may operate such vehicles.
- Children are not permitted to operate, ride on, play with, or touch motorized vehicles, field equipment, maintenance tools, or related machinery at any time. Children are strictly prohibited from entering storage sheds or equipment sheds for any reason.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

7.5 Reporting Misuse

- Any suspected or confirmed misuse of fields, facilities, access codes, motorized vehicles, or equipment must be reported promptly to the appropriate Commissioner or a member of the AAYSA Executive Board. Knowingly failing to report misuse, or choosing to ignore violations, will be considered complicity and may result in disciplinary action.

Section 8: Game Rules and Modifications

8.1 Governing Rules

- All games are played in accordance with USA Softball rules, with NTX Interlock modifications as outlined in the current NTX Interlock Rulebook.

8.2 Division-Specific Rules

- Division-specific rules (4U, 6U, 8U, etc.) are detailed in the NTX Interlock Rule Modifications document and must be followed at all times.

Section 9: Conduct and Sportsmanship

9.1 Coach Responsibilities

- Coaches must model sportsmanship, respect umpires and officials, refrain from arguing judgment calls, and ensure their team spectators comply with conduct expectations. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players and spectators.

9.2 Participant Expectations

- All participants must treat opponents, officials, and league representatives with respect. Taunting, demeaning language, negative chants, artificial noisemakers intended to distract players, or other unsportsmanlike behavior is prohibited.

9.3 Spectator Restrictions

- Parents and spectators are not permitted on the field or in the dugout at any time.
- Parents and spectators may be removed from the facility for misconduct and may not return for the remainder of the day and are subject to suspension from future games and events.
- Violations may result in ejection, suspension, or further disciplinary action as determined by the Executive Board.

Section 10: Safety and Injury Protocols

10.1 Bullying Policy

- Bullying in any form is strictly prohibited. Any confirmed incident of bullying will be addressed immediately. A second substantiated report will result in the player's removal from the team without refund. This policy is non-negotiable.

10.2 Weather Safety

- If lightning is detected within **10 miles**, all players, coaches, and spectators must immediately leave the field and seek shelter in vehicles. A 30-minute wait-out period will be enforced following the last detected lightning strike. Any games or practices canceled due to weather must be reported to the Commissioner for rescheduling consideration.

10.3 Practice and Game Safety

- Coaches must inspect fields and equipment prior to each practice and game to ensure safe conditions. Proper warm-ups and stretching are mandatory. Adequate hydration breaks

must be provided, particularly during hot weather. First aid kits must be available at all practices and games.

10.4 Head Injuries and Emergencies

- Protective face masks are strongly recommended for all infielders, regardless of age division, to reduce the risk of facial injury.
- Any player suspected of sustaining a head injury or concussion must be removed from play immediately and may not return until cleared by a qualified medical professional. Emergency contact information for all players must be accessible at all times. In the event of a serious injury or emergency, call 911 immediately and follow AAYSA board protocols. Players must be supervised at all times while on the field or in the dugout.

Section 11: Communication

11.1 Official Communication Channels

- Official AAYSA communication will be distributed via email, the AAYSA website, and/or the GameChanger App.

11.2 Questions and Concerns

- Questions, concerns, or issues should be directed to the Softball Commissioner at softball@aubreyyouthsports.com.