

NEKS League Rules (updated 4/2023)

NFHS shall govern all play in this league except where noted.

League Fees – Number of teams per age division for each town must be submitted by April 15. Fifty dollars (\$50.00) per team (cap at \$350) must be paid to the league board treasurer by April 15. Fees shall be used for purchasing medals for the league tournament, softballs for the tournament, and rule books for each location.

Age divisions– players will be divided according to the grade level that the player will be finishing in May of the same softball season. A player will be able to play up an age division but will not be able to play down. A player may not play on more than one team in the same age division.

3rd & 4th grades

5th & 6th grades

7th & 8th grades

All players must play within their school district/town. If a player is playing in a different school district/town than attending school district/town it needs to be approved by the exit and receiving town softball boards. This prevents teams from handpicking players from another town to “stack” a team.

Required number of players– Six (6) players will be required to start and finish a game. There will be no penalty for the missing players. A forfeit will be declared if a team does not have the required number of players in 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time of the game.

Line-up cards should include the players’ full name and number. Positions are not required with the exception of the starting pitcher.

3rd & 4th grade will have ten (10) players allowed on the field. Four (4) players will be outfielders with no rover and must be on the grass at the release of pitch or at least 20’ behind baselines. 5th grade and up will have nine (9) players allowed on the field.

Substitution – All age groups have free substitution. A starter or sub can re-enter the game more than once, but they must stay in the same batting order. If a player is injured and not able to play, a player may be inserted into the line-up to play and bat in the injured player’s position. If a player is injured and can’t play and no substitutes are available, they can be dropped from the line up with no penalty.

Teams may either use continuous batting or they may bat the number of fielded positions allowed for that age group. (Fielded positions 3rd & 4th: 10, 5th- 8th: 9) Both the umpires and the opposing coach must be told how you will be batting before the game starts. You will not be allowed to switch how you are batting (continuous/fielded) during the game.

Time limit, number of innings and run rules shall be respected as follows:

Grade	Innings	Time Limit	Run Limit	Run Rule
3 rd & 4 th	5	75 min	5 runs/inning	15 runs after 3 rd inning
5 th & 6 th	6	85 min	6 runs/inning	15 runs after 3 rd inning
7 th & 8 th	7	90 min	7 runs/inning	15 runs after 3 rd inning 10 runs after 5 th inning

The time of the last out of an inning is the start time of the next inning. (Ex: If game is supposed to end at 7:15 but the last out of the inning occurred at 7:14, the next inning will begin.)

If a team is not able to catch up due to the runs per inning limit, the game may be called by the umpires, but if time and field availability allow, then the book is closed, win/loss recorded, then teams may practice to the end of time limit. If you do practice, do not go past time limit. Please be mindful of start times for following games.

Umpires– Two (2) umpires will be required for each game. It shall be the responsibility of the home team to furnish the umpires. Plate umpires are required to wear face masks in all age divisions.

6th grade and under must have a plate and field umpire that are at least 16 years of age or older. 7th & 8th grade must have a plate umpire that is at least 18 years of age and a field umpire that is at least 16 years of age or older.

Playing field– All divisions will use **60 foot** bases. First (1st) base must have a safety base.

Age	Pitching Distance	Ball Size
3 rd & 4 th	35 feet	11 inch
5 th & 6 th	40 feet	12 inch
7 th & 8 th	43 feet	12 inch

Equipment – Proper footwear is required. Metal cleats are NOT allowed. No jewelry is allowed. Batting helmets with masks are required for all batters and baserunners. Full catchers gear including helmets, mask, chest protector, and shin guards are required. Warm up catchers must be wearing helmets and mask unless the warm up catcher is an adult. Balls in all divisions should follow NFHS guidelines (see exceptions for 3rd/4th grade age division). Only ASA/NFHS certified bats and NOCSAE stamped approved helmets should be used.

Dropped 3rd strike will be allowed in 5th grade and up. **NOT** allowed in 3rd/4th age division.

Stealing bases – 5th grade and up can steal all bases. See special exceptions for 3rd/4th age division.

Look-Back Rule (The entire rule is stated in NFHS 8-7)– When the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The runner(s) may stop once, but then immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base. (There are no halfway marks for any NEKS League age divisions that dictate whether a runner can advance to the next base or go back to a base when the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.)

Close plays and sliding- All age divisions will abide by Rule 8-6-13,14. Article 13 – a runner will be out if she does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of the fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her. Runners are never required to slide but, if the runner elects to slide the slide must be legal. Article 14 – a runner will be out if she remains on her feet and maliciously crashes into a defensive player. Malicious contact supersedes obstruction.

Protests– there shall be no post game protests. There will be a \$25.00 fee per protest. If the original ruling is upheld the \$25.00 fee shall go to the league. If the original ruling is overturned, then the \$25.00 fee shall be returned to the protesting team.

Postponements– If a game is postponed due to weather it is the home coach's responsibility to call the opposing coach as soon as you can. Please be courteous. When finding a time for a make-up game each coach must come up with 3 dates that may work for a possible rescheduling of a game. Within a week the postponed game must be on the calendar. You must email your league representative with the rescheduled game date and time.

Weather- If a game is terminated while actively playing due to weather and game is at the halfway point or past then that is the final score. No game will need to be made up.

Schedules– If dates and/or times are not agreeable, please make every effort to reschedule your game. You must email your league representative with the rescheduled date and time.

Game results– scores from each game will be emailed to your league representative by the home coach and cc the opposing coach. If both coaches are in agreement then the league representative will email the results to the league coordinator.

League Champion will be determined by the League Tournament. No regular season champion.

Tournament rules– all regular season rules apply during the tournament. In the event of weather delays the game time may be shortened to accommodate the efficiency of the tournament. Teams will play all tournament games in the designated town hosting the tournament. For each game that is played in the tournament each team will provide a new or an umpire approved used ball for each game. In the event of a tie for seeding in the tournament the decision will be made by a coin flip unless there was a head to head game between the teams in which case the higher seed will go to the team that won the head to head game. During Tournament play, the higher seeded team will be home team for all games unless coming from the loser's bracket. If a higher seeded team makes it to the championship through the loser's bracket and the team they are playing has not lost in tournament play, the home team shall be the team with the better tournament record. An attempt to have an adult plate umpire should be made. Umpires will be paid for by the town hosting the tournament.

For eligibility to play on a team in the league tournament you must be listed on that team's roster or a younger team's roster for the same town, and must have played at least 4 games for that team. Coaches must be able to produce the score books for proof of play. Any other special circumstances must be brought forth to all league reps and voted on to clear a player to be added to the roster at the start or during the tournament.

Tournament Gate Fee – Gate fees for tournament will be \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Children age 5 and under are free.

Tournament schedule- Tournament bracket is not to be changed after made unless approved by the league president.

Season – the season will run with games beginning the week prior to Memorial Day and end with a tournament prior to July 4th.

Special Exceptions for 3rd/4th grade age division

A. Play of game while child pitcher is pitching:

1. One (1) base on balls will be allowed by the child pitcher per inning. After the initial base on balls by the child pitcher, she will continue to pitch. Anytime the child pitcher pitches four (4) balls to any subsequent batter in that inning, a coach from the batting team will pitch for the remainder of the at bat and shall assume only the strike count. A hit batter is a dead ball and the hit batter will advance to 1st base. A hit batter will not be considered the initial walk of an inning since it is a dead ball. In addition, catcher interference will also be called a dead ball and the batter will be awarded 1st base and will not be considered the initial walk of an inning.
2. Leading off at the release of pitch is allowed at any base.
3. A runner on 1st or 2nd can only steal one base per pitch even in the event of an over throw in live ball territory. If the runner does advance an additional base then they are liable to be put out. If the runner is safe at the end of the play, the umpire will return the runner to the correct base.
4. A runner cannot steal home. If the runner does steal home they are liable to be put out. If the runner does steal home and is safe at the end of play, the umpire will return the runner to the correct base.
5. A batter runner who has been awarded 1st base on balls may not attempt to steal second base.
6. A runner can only score on:
 - a. A batted ball;
 - b. Base on balls or hit by pitch when bases are loaded
7. Dropped third strike is not allowed
8. Runner will be able to advance on an over throw of a live batted ball that is still in play.

B. Coach pitch in 3rd & 4th grade age division: After the first base on balls, in each inning, the coach from the batting team will assume the strike count. (Example: If the count equals 4 balls and 1 strike the coach will get 2 pitches.)

1. The coach pitcher shall pitch from the 35' rubber.
2. All pitches thrown by the coach will be strikes (even hit by pitch).
3. No bunting will be allowed when a coach is pitching.
4. If the batter fouls the 3rd strike she will remain at bat even if the coach is pitching.
5. Delay of game by the pitching coach will result in a strike.
6. The player/pitcher must be in the pitching circle parallel to one side of the pitching rubber.
7. If the pitching coach is accidentally hit by a batted ball, the ball is live. If the pitching coach catches a batted ball the batter is out and the play is dead.
8. No leading off at the release of the pitch, stealing bases or stealing home is allowed while the coach is pitching.

9. Runner will be able to advance on an over throw of a live batted ball that is in play.