

# TORONTO DOWNTOWN FASTPITCH LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS

## **1. RULES**

**1.01** The Toronto Downtown Fastpitch League (“TDFL”) is governed by its current versions of:

- TDFL Constitution;
- TDFL Code of Conduct;
- TDFL Rules and Regulations; and
- Softball Canada Official Rulebook, except for the amendments approved in the TDFL Constitution and TDFL Rules and Regulations.

**1.02** In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Members may make exceptions to the TDFL Rules and Regulations. The guiding principle in making exceptions shall be the TDFL’s mission statement in the TDFL Constitution.

## **2. REGISTRATION AND FEES**

**2.01** No one may play before submitting a completed registration form and paying a registration fee to the TDFL, with the exception of players with agreed arrangements by the TDFL Executive and pay-per-game players.

**2.02** The Executive will set the registration fees for each season.

**2.03** If a player resigns from the league and wishes to receive a refund, they must submit a written request to a member of the Executive for the refund, failing which their refund will be forfeited. The refunds, based on the date the Executive receives the resignation refund request, are:

- a. 80% before the first week of the season;
- b. 50% on or before the eighth week of the season;

c. 0% on or after the eighth week of the season.

**2.04** Registration will open in January for enrollment in the league's season. To maintain a high level of play, all returning players and registrants will be subject to a skills assessment determined by the Roster Planning and Recruitment Committee established by the Executive Members.

**2.05** Rosters and team names change every year. Best efforts will be made to accommodate two players who have made a mutually inclusive request to play together.

**2.06** The Roster Planning and Recruitment Committee will assign players to a team based on skill level, experience, and preferred positions. The TDFL strives for team parity.

### **3. TEAMS AND PLAYERS**

**3.01** Teams must field at least eight players at each game, and for the entirety of each game.

- a. A team with fewer than eight players at the start of the game is subject to rule 4.02.
- b. If for any reason a team drops below eight players during the game, the team is subject to rule 4.02c and will receive an unauthorized default.
- c. If the team defaults, the opposing team may choose to play an exhibition game.

**3.02** Teams playing with eight players will not receive an automatic out in their batting order.

**3.03** Teams that begin a game with eight or more players may add an additional player:

- a. Defensively when a regular stoppage in play occurs and
- b. Offensively, in the bottom spot in the batting order.

**3.04** Teams may field as many substitute players as needed to field up to a maximum of ten players and substitute players should not exceed 40% of the total players, unless the additional player is a pitcher or catcher, in which case the maximum does not apply.

**3.05** Teams using a substitute player must tell the Team Leads WhatsApp chat the substitute player's name. Approval must be granted by a team lead from the opposing team and an executive member.

**3.06** Substitute players:

- a. Must be identified as a pay-per-game player and in advance of the games by the opposing team and the Executive;
- b. Are restricted to a maximum of 8 games in the TDFL league each year;
- c. May not pitch during playoffs.
- d. Must complete a substitute player registration form in advance of gameplay at least once per season.
- e. Must pay the pay-per-game player fee of \$10 prior to game start by email money transfer to [tdfl.fastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:tdfl.fastpitch@gmail.com)
- f. Must be approved by a member of the Executive, and the team lead opposing team ahead of the game.

**3.07** Teams may ask players of other teams to play with them in a regular season game to avoid playing with fewer than 9 players. The team using a registered pick-up player is not required to pay the pay-per-game registration fee. If a regular roster player appears at the game, they must enter the game for the pick-up player from the other team unless to do so would drop the number of players to below 9.

#### **4. GAME TIMES**

**4.01** Official game times for regular season games are:

- a. early games: 7:00 pm to no later than 8:50 pm, with no new inning starting after 8:40; and
- b. late games: 9:00 pm to no later than 10:50 pm, with no new inning starting after 10:40.

**4.02** If a team does not have the required number of players to start the game at the official game time, that team:

- a. will be granted a 15-minute grace period;
- b. may be granted a short extension of the grace period if:
  - i. that team has confirmed that an additional player is enroute and expects to arrive within a few minutes; and
  - ii. both teams agree to the extension of the grace period;
- c. will receive an unauthorized default after the expiry of the grace period and any extension of the grace period if it still does not have the required number of players to start the game.

**4.03** Any regular season game that starts late must still comply with Rule 4.01.

## **5. DEFAULTS**

**5.01** Defaults are:

- a. unauthorized when a team fails to field at least eight players or do not have a minimum of 40% of their original team present by the expiry of the grace period or any extension of the grace period; or
- b. authorized when a team provides the Executive and of its opponent with notice of the default at least 48 hours before the scheduled game time.

**5.02** Teams responsible for an unauthorized default must pay a fine equivalent to the umpires’ fees for the defaulted game. This fee may be waived if both teams agree to play an exhibition game. The scheduled umpires must still umpire the game. If playing an exhibition game, both teams can have unlimited substitute players.

**5.03** Teams responsible for a default will be assigned a loss and their opponents will receive a win for the defaulted game and the score will be recorded as 7-0.

**6. REGULAR SEASON AND GAME CANCELLATIONS – INCLUDING WEATHER CONDITIONS**

**6.01** The Executive will announce the regular season schedule before the season begins. Once approved by the Executive, the schedule is not subject to change except to reschedule cancelled games.

**6.02** Regular season games will be a maximum of seven innings. Five (5) innings, or four and a half (4 ½) innings if the home team is winning, may qualify as a game if weather, time limits, darkness, or other circumstances prevent the completion of seven innings.

**6.03** The Executive may cancel games due to weather or climate conditions up until 3:00 pm on the game day. If a game is cancelled, the Executive must advise the applicable team leads, who must advise their teams about the cancellation. In instances of inclement weather or worsening climate conditions, games may be cancelled later than 3:00 pm.

**6.04** Air Quality Policy With reference to the [Toronto - Air Quality Health Index](#), games status, length, or time may be altered.

Air Quality Health Index	Play Restriction
Less than 7	None
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90-minute games.</li> <li>• No new inning after 80 minutes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams must have 10 players.</li> </ul>
9 or above	Games cancelled

**6.05 Heat Policy** With reference to [the Weather Network - Trinity Bellwoods location](#) games status, length, or time may be altered.

Temperature	Humidex	Play Restriction
Less than 35°C	Less than 35°C	None
35°C to 37°C	35°C to 39°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90-minute games.</li> <li>No new inning after 80 minutes.</li> <li>Teams must have 10 players.</li> </ul>
38°C or more	40°C or more	Games cancelled

**6.06** If both teams scheduled to play at a game arrive at the park to play the game and the weather or condition of the field prevents the game from beginning, then the Executive, team leads, and umpires shall meet and determine if the game will begin, be temporarily postponed, or be cancelled and rescheduled.

**6.07** Once a game begins, it is within the discretion of the umpire to cancel any game due to weather.

**6.08** If a game is cancelled due to weather or climate conditions, the Executive will reschedule it on a Tuesday between the regular season and the playoffs.

**6.07** If a game is not completed – as defined by rule 6.02 – for any reason, the game will be rescheduled and replayed from the beginning. If there are no more available days to do so, the game will not be rescheduled or replayed.

## **7. PLAYOFFS**

- 7.01** The playoff schedule shall be set before the season starts.
- 7.02** All teams will play in the playoffs unless one of the exceptions in these Rules applies or unless otherwise ordered by the Executive.
- 7.03** The team with the higher standing at the end of the regular season will be the home team in the first playoff game in each round of playoffs.
- 7.04** Playoff games cannot end in a tie. The international tiebreaker rule will be used in playoff games that are tied at the end of the 7th inning. When applying the international tiebreaker rule, the last available batter from the previous inning starts the inning at second base at the beginning of each team's at-bat.
- 7.05** If the early game has not ended by 9:00 pm, then the late game will be rescheduled unless both teams agree to play.
- 7.06** If the late game has a delayed start and the lights go out during the game, then the winner will be determined by reverting to the last completed inning that did not end in a tie, subject to rule 7.07.
- 7.07** Five innings, or four and a half innings if the home team is winning, will qualify as a playoff game when weather or darkness prevents the completion of the game. Incomplete games will be rescheduled and replayed from the beginning.
- 7.08** During playoffs, teams may use a maximum of two non-roster players per game. The non-roster pick-up players can either be from another team in the league or pay-per-game (external to the league) player. Non-roster players may not pitch in the playoffs.

## **8. GROUND RULES**

- 8.01** If the ball clears the pedestrian path in the air and travels over the top of the bank of the Dog Bowl without first contacting the ground, the hit should be ruled a home run.

**8.02** If the ball makes contact with the ground and rolls onto the pedestrian path, and/or travels over the top of the bank of the Dog Bowl, the outfielders should raise one arm and the hit will be ruled as either a ground rule double or ground rule triple depending on the position of the runner. If the runner has advanced at least one step past second base at the time the ball goes out of play (i.e., makes contact with the pedestrian path), the hit should be ruled a ground rule triple and the runner will advance to third base. All base runners on the base path ahead of the runner will advance two bases for a ground rule double and three bases for a ground rule triple. If the runner has not advanced at least one step past second base at the time the ball goes out of play, the hit should be ruled a ground rule double.

Final discretion on this rule rests with the umpires. This rule applies to regular season and playoffs.

## **9. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

**9.01** The TDFL will provide jerseys and pronoun patches at the beginning of the season. The application of the pronoun patches is optional. Players may modify or personalize their jerseys as long as the league logo and jersey number remain visible.

**9.02** Players and team leads must wear close-toed shoes.

**9.03** Players are not permitted to wear metal cleats or any shoes with metal elements on the sole.

**9.04** Players are recommended against wearing jewellery but may do so at their own discretion. The league assumes no liability for injuries incurred with jewellery.

**9.05** Eligible bats for use in the TDFL

- League players may only use bats that have one of [the following bat certification stamps](#):

**ISF2005    WBSC (New)    ASA2000    ASA2004    USA Softball  
(New)**



- The bat should not have any rattle sounds or broken pieces and be free of splinters and cracks.
- League bats will be provided; however, bats must have at least one of the stamps detailed above.
- Umpires or TDFL Executive may check a bat to assess its eligibility.

## **10. LEAGUE CONDUCT**

**10.01** Smoking (including vaping, e-cigarettes, and weed) or drinking alcohol on the field, or in the dugout is not permitted.

**10.02** Drinking alcohol during a game while playing or team leading is not permitted.

**10.03** Any player who appears to be drunk or under the influence of drugs will be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Executive or Umpires with the guidance and input from the Team Leads.

**10.04** Any player or team lead who verbally or physically abuses, threatens, or swears at an umpire, a player, or a team lead during a game at the discretion of the umpires will be ejected from the game and

- a. the ejection shall be noted on the official score sheet and reported to the Executive;
- b. the ejected player will receive a suspension, in addition to the game they are ejected from, as follows:
  - i. one game for the first offence;

- ii. three games for the second offence; or
- iii. expulsion from the league for the third offence.

**10.05** Any player ejected from a game may appeal their suspension to the Executive. Each team not directly involved with the game in question shall have one vote to be shared to the Executive to resolve the appeal.

**10.06** At the umpires and an Executive's discretion, any inappropriate or distracting actions and verbalizations such as but not limited to:

- a. negative comments or actions at a pitcher or catcher;
- b. negative comments or actions directed at a batter;
- c. negative comments or actions used to distract fielders;
- d. from team leads, spectators, or other players, which are directed towards any players during game time or an opposing team, may be addressed. The following action may be taken:
  - i. first incident: warning is issued to team and individual;
  - ii. second incident: the team lead or player is ejected; and,
  - iii. third incident: the team forfeits the game.

**10.07** All players and team leads are bound by the TDFL Code of Conduct and by the TDFL Concussion Protocol.

## **11. GENERAL**

**11.01** Dugouts: Home team will sit in the third base dugout. Visitors in the first base dugout. Only players, team leads, and scorekeepers are permitted in the dugouts during permit hours.

- 11.02 Bases/Field:** The away team of the early game is responsible for setting up the field, including the bases, pitcher's rubber, and lining the diamond. The away team of the late game is responsible for removing the equipment from the field and locking it up.
- 11.03 Dimensions:** Bases are 60 feet apart and the pitching distance is 43 feet measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber. The distance from the back of home plate to the middle of second base is 84ft and 10 ¼ inches.
- 11.04 Protective Equipment:** Catchers must wear masks, a chest protector, shin protectors, and a helmet. No one may catch without this equipment. All batters, on deck batters, and runners must wear helmets with a foam liner, two earflaps, and a peak.
- 11.05 Jewellery:** Jewellery is permitted, however, the umpires may ask players to remove or tape any jewellery that they deem unsafe.
- 11.06 Scorekeeping:** the home team is the official scorekeeper and must:
- a. include the name and uniform number of each player on the score sheet;
  - b. submit the score to the Executive or the designated score manager.
- 11.07 Injury Rule:** If an injury is sustained during gameplay, time will be taken for the player to assess and tend to their injury. It is the sole discretion of the umpire if a player is permitted to return to gameplay after an injury is incurred during permit hours on permit grounds. Any player may enter or re-enter a game to replace an injured player if the umpire deems an injury serious enough that the injured player cannot continue to play.
- 11.08 Blood Rule:** A player must be withdrawn from the game if bleeding cannot be stopped within a reasonable time, or if their uniform becomes excessively covered in blood. Any player may enter or re-enter a game as a temporary substitute for an injured player who must tend to an open wound. Once the wound is dressed, the injured player will re-enter the game for the temporary substitute.

- 11.09** Exiting a Game: A player may exit the game, at any point, if they feel unwell and are unable to continue playing. There will be no auto-out for this player. All runs scored by the player prior to their exit are counted towards the game score. Players are expected to utilize this rule only in exceptional circumstances, such as an injury incurred during gameplay, or an acute worsening of an injury or well-being during the game. Players are strongly encouraged to carefully consider their well-being prior to entering a game. Team leads are strongly encouraged to dissuade injured or unwell players from engaging in play.
- 11.10** Courtesy Runners: Each team may use three courtesy runners per game. Any player on the team roster may be chosen. Teams may use the same player for all three courtesies.
- 11.11** Catcher's Rule: After two outs in an inning, the catcher for the next inning that is on base may be replaced with the last available batter.
- 11.12** Mercy Rule per Inning: Each team may score a maximum of seven runs per inning with the exception of the last inning, which is an open inning.
- 11.13** Mercy Rule per Game: After five complete innings, a regular season or playoff game will end if one team is winning by 15 runs or more. If time permits, the trailing team will decide to continue play in exhibition or end play.
- 11.14** Tie game: Regular season games may end in a tie. No extra innings will be played during the regular season to break a tie.
- 11.15** Notice of End of Game: Umpires must notify each team when the last inning begins.
- 11.16** Umpires: Umpires are the official timekeepers in all situations. Any comments, concerns, or complaints regarding the umpires not adhering to these Rules or Softball Canada Rules or any inappropriate behaviour should be submitted in writing to the Executive. In regular season and playoffs, the Umpires have the discretion to end a game due to weather or unsafe playing conditions. If an Umpire ends the game due to

weather or unsafe playing conditions, five innings, or four and a half innings if the home team is winning, will qualify as a game.

**11.17 Weather:** Discussion regarding game cancellations due to weather (i.e. cancelling a game before it is completed due to rain) is only to take place between the home plate and base umpire. If an impartial third party (i.e. executive not playing the game) is in attendance they may be involved in the discussion.

**11.18 Substitution and Re-entry:** Unlimited defensive substitution is permitted. Teams must have all players participating in the game in the batting lineup.

## **12. STANDINGS**

**12.01** League standings will be determined by awarding the following points to regular season games:

- a. 3 points – Win
- b. 2 point – Tie
- c. 1 points – Loss
- d. 0 points - Default

**12.02** If teams are tied in the standings at the end of the regular season, then the following statistics will used to determine the standings:

- a. total wins;
- b. win/loss record between the tied teams;
- c. runs for minus runs against between the two tied teams;
- d. if teams are still tied, then a one-game playoff.

## **13. PROTESTS**

**13.01** The Executive will settle any grievances, protests, or problems.

**13.02** Protests must be submitted in writing to the Executive within 24 hours of the event in question. If a team chooses to protest a game that is underway, this should be stated verbally between the team leads and the umpire(s). The game should be played to completion, unless another occurrence prevents it (e.g. weather). A written submission by email to the Executive is still required.

**13.03** The protest fee is \$25.00.

**13.04** To resolve a protest, a meeting of the Executive will be convened. A protest during the regular season must be resolved within 48 hours of receipt, unless extenuating circumstances prevent a resolution within that time frame. A protest during the playoffs must be resolved within 24 hours of receipt, unless extenuating circumstances prevent a resolution within that time frame. Each team not involved in the protest will be entitled to one vote and will vote on the outcome. Both teams will receive the decision in writing by email.

**13.05** If the losing team wins the protest, a new game will be replayed from the start. If the protest is successful, the protest fee will be returned.

#### **14. FEES AND FINES**

**14.01** Any player who fails to pay any outstanding fees to TDFL by end of the season will not be eligible to play the following season until all their outstanding fees are paid.

#### **15. DEFINITIONS**

**Executive** - Comprising the TDFL board of directors.

**Exhibition game** - A friendly game that is outside of the standings.

**Substitute players** - A player that may be a pay-per-game player or a registered player that is not assigned to the team they are subbing on.

**Pay-per-game player** - An unregistered player that is substituting for individual games and is subject to a \$10 fee to play. Pay-per-game players are also substitute players.

**Registered Pick-up player** - A registered player substituting for individual games for another team in the league.

**Rostered player** - A registered player that is playing on the team they were assigned to by the Executive.

**Team Lead** - A player or non-player coach that is responsible for leading and representing the interests of a TDFL team.

#### **Revision Log:**

- August 21, 2025: Changed all instances of “non-rostered player” to “substitute player”.
- August 21, 2025: Rule 3.04 revised from “nine” to “ten” players.
- August 21, 2025: Rule 3.04 A removed “on the score sheet of both teams” when a substitute player is used.
- Sept 29, 2025: Rule 11.10 - added “for the next inning that is on base” to clarify when a player can be deemed a catcher while on base.
- Apr 9, 2026: Rule 8.02 added to change ground rule double to ground rule triple. Rule 10.07 added. Modified rule 2.03 to be static based on number of weeks, instead of by individual calendar year milestone dates.
- Apr 9, 2026: expanded rule 11.07 and added rule 11.09. Re-numbered subsequent rules.
- April 9, 2026: modified 6.03 and 6.06 to incorporate climate conditions into considerations for cancelling or modifying a game length. Added rules 6.04 and 6.05 to incorporate air quality policies and heat policies. Re-numbered subsequent rules.
- April 9, 2026: added 9.05 regarding eligible bats.

- April 9, 2026: expanded rule 11.01 to limit who may enter the dugout during permit hours.