



BASEBALL ♦ SOFTBALL

Major Girls Softball Rules 2017 Season

1. LINEUPS

- A. Starting lineups will consist of a **maximum of 9 players in the field**, every player will be in the batting order.
- B. **All players will play a minimum of 3 innings and have registered at least one “at bat” per game.**

NOTE: Coaches of the “home” team are obligated to satisfy all requirements of this rule by **substituting for a player “due up” within the next 6 batters beginning in the fourth inning to prevent a player from not receiving an “at bat”** as the home team will not bat in the bottom of the 6th inning if they have the lead after the top of the 6th inning. If a team fails to meet these requirements and the league’s Board of Directors receives a protest an audit of the scorebooks will be conducted. If found in violation of this rule, the offending team will forfeit the game.

- C. Players may be substituted in the field freely during the game.
- D. Any team is allowed to **begin any game** provided they have at least **8 players**, from their roster, in their game lineup. If a team does not have 8 players present at the scheduled start time of the game, they will be allowed 15 minutes for additional players to arrive. If 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the game a team cannot register a lineup of 8 players present from their roster, they must forfeit the game. **A team starting with 8 players must record an out each time the 9th batting position (the absent players batting position) is scheduled to come to bat. Any additions made** to the starting lineup made after “ground rules” and prior to the first batter of the offending team receiving the first pitch in their second at bat must be **added to the bottom of the lineup**. If a player arrives after the first batter of the offending team has received their first legal pitch in their second at bat, the player must be inserted into the lineup as a substitute as the offending team will still be required to play with less than 9 players until next full inning begins. Coaches are **not** obligated to observe rule 1b for any players arriving after the first legal pitch in the 4th inning
- E. If a player is injured during a game the coach has the option substitute, forfeit, or to play on with less than 9 players. **If the batting order drops below 9 batters every time the injured player(s) are scheduled to come to bat, an out must be recorded in the score book.**

2. GROUND RULES

- A. Ground rules for each game will be determined before the start of play by the umpire and coaches from both teams. During ground rules the umpire must reinforce a warning that any player **intentionally and recklessly throwing their bat** will result in that player being called **out**. The umpire's discretion has final authority. Also during ground rules the umpire must reinforce that any **player recklessly and intentionally throwing any equipment (helmets, gloves, etc.) may be ejected from the game or the field completely at the sole discretion of the umpire.**
- B. **All games will be scheduled for 6 innings.** Games may be called due to darkness or inclement weather. **Four full innings will constitute a complete game. A home team winning at the start of, or during any part of, the bottom of the 4th (or any subsequent) inning constitutes a complete inning in the event a game is called.** If a game is called before 4 complete innings, the game will be replayed from the beginning. If a game is called before an inning is complete the score reverts back to what it was at the completion of the last full inning. **When there is inclement weather, the game will be delayed up to 30 minutes. If after 30 minutes the conditions are not suitable for game play (i.e. still raining, fields are sloppy, darkness) then the preceding rule will apply. (March 2010)** If there is lightning or lightning is heard overhead the game will be suspended. A game will not restart until 30 minutes after the lightning has subsided. (March 2011). The top of **any inning must start prior to 8 PM during May, and by 8:15 in June for games played on Monday through Friday. No new innings may start after 2 hours have elapsed from the games scheduled start time for weekend games.** All complete games concluding in a tie score, as a result of the game being called, will be registered as a tie.
- C. The **mercy rule (15 run rule) IS** in effect for this division. If after 5 full innings the home team has a lead of 15 or more runs, the away team has the top of the next inning to reduce the home teams lead to less than 15 runs or the game will be declared complete by the umpire. If after 5 full innings the away team has the lead by 15 or more runs the game will be declared complete by the umpire. If in any subsequent innings, the away team has a lead of 15 or more runs they will complete their turn at bat and the home team will have the bottom half of the inning to reduce the away teams lead to less than 15 runs. If the home team fails to do this, the umpire shall declare the game complete. Note: The mercy rule does not apply in situations after a complete 6 inning game has been played or ruled.
- D. Players may **not wear jewelry with the exception of earrings which must be covered with tape.** Players may **not wear metal spikes. No open toed or open heeled footwear**, i.e. sandals, flip-flops, are allowed. League supplied team shirts and hat, along with grey baseball pants must be worn by all players. Socks are a requirement.
- E. **Helmets are mandatory** for any player at bat, on base, "on deck", coaching a base, pitchers warming up on the pitcher's mound. **Catchers helmet and mask is mandatory** for any player warming up a pitcher, either on or off the field, or playing the catchers position during a game or practice. **Cage is mandatory on all batting helmets.**
- F. **Fielders masks are mandatory for pitcher, first base and third base**, and are highly recommended for all infielders
- G. Infield fly rule will be in effect. The umpire will decide whether or not a fly ball is considered a routine fly ball or not. If the fly ball is not considered a routine catch the infield fly rule is not applied.
- H. **Bases will be 60 feet apart.** The **pitchers rubber will be 40 feet** from the rear tip of home plate.

- I. The umpire or coaches may call a time out if a discussion of a play is necessary. The umpire makes the final decisions on all plays.
- J. Appeals: On appeal plays the defensive team loses the opportunity of having the runner called out if any of the following occur:
 - i. The appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch.
 - ii. The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or
 - iii. On the last play of the game the umpires have left live ball territory.

(Live Ball Appeal) If properly appealed during a live ball, the runner is out.

(Dead Ball Appeal) Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time is called, any infielder with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. No runner may leave a base during this period as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.

- i. If the ball leaves live ball territory, a dead ball appeal cannot be made until completion of all legal advancement of by base runners.
- ii. If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitcher's plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.
- iii. If "play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire shall call "time" and allow the appeal process.

3. PITCHING

- A. Underhand fast pitch will be in effect. When the pitcher begins their motion, they must continue pitching the ball to the batter. If the pitcher starts their motion and stops the umpire will call an "illegal pitch"; the base runners will advance one base. The pitch will be ruled a dead ball, neither a ball nor a strike. The pitcher must be in contact with the pitcher's rubber, with both feet, before they begin their motion and remain in contact until the pitch is delivered.
- B. If any **pitcher hits 3 batters** with a pitched ball in the same game, that pitcher must be **removed from the pitching position** for the **duration of that game**.
- C. Any coach may come out twice in one inning to visit with the pitcher. When any coach makes the 3rd visit to that pitcher in that inning, that player must be removed from the pitching position. Total visits to an individual pitcher during the course of a game are limited to 3. If a 4th visit to that same pitcher is taken, that pitcher must be removed from the pitching position for the duration of that game.

4. BASERUNNING/HITTING

- A. **Overthrows** that go **out of play** will result in the base runner being awarded the **base she is running to and the next base**.
- B. **Stealing is permitted**. A **runner** may attempt to steal any base, once the pitch has left the pitcher's hand. **If the runner is not attempting to steal**, and the **ball is** returned and **secured by** the **pitcher** within a **6-foot radius** of the **pitcher's plate**, the **runner is required to return to base they last occupied** and await the next pitch. Any movement by the runner attempting to draw a "pickoff" type throw from the pitcher once the pitcher has secured control within the 6-foot radius of the pitchers plate will be considered a **delay of game** warranting **one**

warning from the umpire. Every further delay caused by this action will result in the base **runner being called out**. **This warning applies to both teams and any subsequent base runners.**

- C. **Sliding is required.** There is no head first sliding. A base runner must slide to avoid any **collision (solid, forceful impact)**, whether the collision is deliberate or accidental, with the defensive player **either waiting for, securing, or in possession of the ball**. Failure to avoid a collision caused by the base runner not sliding will result in the runner immediately being called out. **NOTE:** Coaches must familiarize themselves with the obstruction rules which will be enforced.
- D. **Bunting is allowed**
- E. **Dropped 3rd strike rule is in effect.**
- i. A batter may **“steal” first base** if the catcher does not catch and control the ball on the third strike.
 - ii. First base must be unoccupied for this rule to be in effect unless there are two outs in which case first base is considered to be open even if occupied. A batter leaving greater than a 3-foot radius of the batters’ box without moving towards first base will immediately be called out. **NOTE:** A **pitch that strikes the ground** prior to be touched by the catcher as the batter swings and misses for a **third strike** is considered a **live ball** and allows the batter all privileges of stealing first base. This rule applies regardless of any clean **“scoop”** by the catcher or if the ball is trapped cleanly against the ground as in neither of these cases is it considered a **“catch”** of the pitch.
- F. **A base runner, or batter-runner, struck by a batted ball** in any base path before it touches or passes any fielder or umpire will immediately be **called out**.
- G. A batted ball that strikes any part of the batters’ person while in the batter’s box is an immediate dead ball.
- H. **A batted ball that bounces inside of or over any part of first or third base** whereas the trajectory causes it to subsequently land in foul territory **is a fair ball**. A ball batted into the air beyond first or third base is always judged solely where it lands, provide the trajectory of the ball was not altered by any player, coach, umpire, spectator, or team and/or field equipment. A batted ball touched by a player in fair territory that first touches the ground in foul territory is a fair ball; a batted ball that ricochets off of the backstop or baseline fence and come back into fair territory is a foul ball.
- I. A batted ball struck directly off of home plate is a live ball, provided it remains in fair territory.
- i. **NOTE:** A batted ball **“chopped”** directly off of home plate whose trajectory allows enough time for the catcher to catch the ball prior to it striking the ground is judged **“fair”** or **“foul”** solely on the position of the ball within or outside of the base lines when it comes in contact with the catcher’s mitt.
- J. **A runner who interferes with a fielder** who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball will immediately be **called out regardless if the interference was intentional or not**. **NOTE:** **“Any runner is out when running more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged out, unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.”**
- K. A batter **cannot step “on” or “over” home plate while at bat**, as she will be immediately called out, UNLESS she

is attempting to avoid being hit by the pitched ball. Batters hit by a pitched ball (including any part of the batter's uniform) will be awarded first base. **NOTE: The batter's hands and fingers are considered to be part of the bat while swinging.** And contact with a pitched ball with either the hands or fingers during a swing will not result in the batter being awarded any of the privileges of a "hit" batter. **The hand and fingers ARE NOT considered part of the bat when attempting to avoid being hit by a pitched ball.** Contact of the hands, or fingers, and the ball while avoiding a pitched ball will create an immediate dead ball and permit the batter to be awarded first base. Batters **do not have** to make an effort to avoid being hit by the ball. The ball does not belong in the batter's box.

K. Batting out of order. The batting order shall show the names, in the order in which the players are scheduled to bat. Any changes must be made to both teams score books. It is up to the team making any changes to the batting order to notify the opposing team prior to the change being made.

- i. When it is discovered that a player is batting "out of order" prior to becoming a base runner, she must be replaced by the correct batter, who will immediately enter the batter's box and play resumes with the same count of balls/strikes (if previously called on wrong batter), and outs. No outs or penalties will be assessed
- ii. All base running action during an "out of order" batter, providing it occurs prior to the wrong batter becoming a base runner will be legal and will not be changed or penalized.
- iii. **All action resulting from a batter batting out of order will stand if the defense does not appeal prior to the first pitch to the next batter.** Proper action will continue with the batting order resuming with the next batter who normally follows the previous batter that just batted out of order. The batter who was supposed to bat previous to the last (out of order) batter simply loses his turn at bat.
- iv. **If the defense appeals prior to the next pitch** to the next batter, the out of order batter's status remains, however, the batter that was supposed to bat will be called out and any runners advancing or scoring shall be nullified and any base runners will return the base they occupied prior to the out of order batter receiving the first pitch in the batting out of order sequence. Play resumes with the proper batter (the batter batting out of order) being the batter again.

L. Courtesy Runners

- i. Courtesy Runners may be used only for the pitcher, catcher or for an injured baserunner.
- ii. The pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the line-up card as pitcher and catcher.
- iii. The courtesy runner will be the last out registered on the home teams score book.
- iv. All courtesy runners must be brought to the attention of the umpire.

5. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

A. Unsportsmanlike **Conduct** by players, coaches, or spectators will be dealt with by the umpire. One warning will be issued. If unsportsmanlike conduct continues, the offending person(s) will be ejected from the playing field, bench, or grandstand areas. This one warning will be issued to both teams' coaches and applies to both teams. In extreme situations, the umpires have the authority to declare a game over and have the game forfeited to the opponent of the offending team or the offending teams spectators.

- B. Tie **Breakers** for the regular seasons final standings to determine playoff match ups will be decided in the following order when 2 teams are tied:
 - i. Head to Head Won-Lost Record.
 - ii. Total runs Against Head to Head (March 2011)
 - iii. Coin Toss
- C. Tie Breakers for the regular seasons final standing to determine playoff matchup will be decided in the following order when 3 or more teams are tied:
 - i. Head to Head winning percentage amongst all team tied.
 - ii. If 2 teams are still tied refer back to rule 5b for breaking this tie.
- D. Any team found to have played with ineligible players, or did not meet all rules regarding minimum innings played, a minimum of 1 complete at bat, and pitching rules will result in the offending team forfeiting the game in protest.
- E. The home team's scorebook is the official scorebook of the game. Both coaches should be sure that this book is accurate before signing.
- F. All protests must be filled through the divisional representative.
- G. The league will follow ASA rules unless specifically noted in the league rules.

6. PLAYOFFS

- A. All playoff games will be played in their entirety, until a winner is declared.
- B. Mercy rule still applies.
- C. If a game is called due to weather or time limit and the game ***is not*** official, the game will be rescheduled and replayed. Notify Div. Rep. to reschedule game.
- D. If a game is called due to weather or time limit and ***is*** an official game (4 innings), the game will be resumed from the point where the game was called. Coaches/scorekeepers on each team must review and confirm that books are accurate. The umpire of the game will initial the team books, as he is a witness to the called game. Notify Div. Rep. to schedule game to be resumed.

* **Note:** games should be called at top or bottom of an inning whenever possible.

If not possible... when play resumes... offensive players must stay in the same batting order as when game was called, unless LEGAL SUBSTITUTION is made. Defensive players that were in the game when the game was called, must take the field when game resumes. These players are allowed to play any position in the field except the pitcher. The player that was pitching when the game was called must be the same player that is pitching when game resumes, unless legal substitution is used and then pitching and substitution rules apply.