

**Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Southeast Region**

**BABE RUTH 8U SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES
FOR THE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL TOURNAMENT**

The following Southeast Regional 8U Softball Tournament Rules are recommended for District or Area tournaments, State tournaments, and local league play. For rules not covered in this document, refer to the current edition of the Babe Ruth League, Inc. Softball Rules & Regulations & Official Playing Rules. 8U Softball is open to all League Age (on May 1) 7- and 8-year-olds.

1. Pitching machine and game balls – A spring-loaded portable pitching machine and Babe Ruth-approved 11-inch tournament softballs are required to be used in Regional tournament play. The pitching machine is placed at 35 ft. with a speed of 32 mph (established when ball crosses home plate). The front stabilizer plate of the machine must be placed in front of the pitching rubber (best if up against the front edge of the rubber or at least the front edge of any underground base for the pitching rubber). Coaches are not allowed to check the machine before their team bats. Only umpires may decide if adjustments should be made. (Rule 11.07-8U (k))

2. Batting order – 10* players will bat in order [11 with Extra Player (EP)].

A. **Extra Player (EP)** – The EP can be used as the 11th batter. If a team elects this option, it must start with the EP and end with the EP or forfeit the game. NOTE: It is not required that both teams use this option.

B. **Outfielders** – There will be four* outfielders. ALL outfielders must remain in the grass area of the outfield (cannot be initially positioned in the infield at any time).

*Rule 1.01 – Softball is a game between two teams of nine players each, under direction of a manager, played on an enclosed field in accordance with these rules, under jurisdiction of one or more umpires. A team with only nine players available shall bat all nine players without the use of the EP and use three outfielders.

C. **Pitcher** – The player that assumes the pitcher's position must remain within the "mound" (8-foot-radius circle), behind the machine, and on one side or the other until the ball is hit. If the pitcher violates any of these requirements, then (1) The play will stand, even if the pitcher is involved in the play, and (2) The umpire(s) will warn the violating pitcher's manager that if that same pitcher violates one or both requirements

again, she will have to be removed from the pitcher's position. The player can assume another position but cannot re-enter as a pitcher in that game. The player may not be ejected from the game for this infraction. NOTE: The Pitcher position is only a reference to a "Fielder's" position (does not deliver a pitch). Therefore, there is NO "Number of Innings Pitched" rule for the player in the position. A "courtesy runner" is not allowed for the pitcher.

D. **Catcher** – The catcher takes the catcher's normal position in full gear.

3. Game length – Six innings or no new inning can begin after 1-1/2 hours, whichever comes first; however, no tie games are allowed, the game must continue until there is a winner. In Championship Games, there is No Time Limit.

4. Batter – Each batter receives a maximum of four pitches. If the batter strikes out (on or before the fourth pitch), or if the ball has not been hit into play after four pitches, the batter is out.

A. If the batter fouls the fourth pitch, the batter will receive pitches as long as the batter continues to foul pitches. [Note: Any fouled bunt after two strikes is a third strike and the batter is out.]

B. There are no bases on balls in machine-pitch 8U.

C. The batter will be awarded first base if she is touched by a pitched ball which she is not attempting to hit unless (1) the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, or (2) the batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball. If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball (Rule 6.08b).

D. During the first five innings, each half inning is over when three outs are made or when five runs are scored. In the sixth inning and in any extra innings, there is no run limitation.

5. 15-run rule – If one team is ahead by 15 runs at the end of three complete innings the game must be terminated by the plate umpire and shall be declared a regulation game.

6. 10-run rule – If one team is ahead by 10 or more runs at the end of four (or five) complete innings (three and a half or four and a half innings if the home team is ahead) the game must be terminated by the plate umpire.

7. Field dimensions – Standard softball base length of 60 feet. (Rule 1.04)

8. Umpires –

A. there are two umpires. One umpire is behind the plate and the other umpire will feed the machine. Machine should be checked prior to batting. Only the umpire may make adjustments during play.

B. Either umpire is allowed to declare “no pitch” if the umpire judges that the pitch is not reasonably hittable. This is a judgment call and thus not subject to protest. This judgment will be declared after the pitch has reached the batter. However, if the batter swings at such a pitch before a “no pitch” is called, the result of the swing will count.

9. Dead ball –

A. The ball will be declared dead when, in the umpire’s judgment, there is a “no pitch” called, the defensive team stops the lead runner, or the runner abandons the effort to advance. Once play has been stopped, no other runners may advance beyond the last base tagged.

B. The ball will be declared dead when a player is injured and, in the umpire's judgment, is unable to continue the play.

C. If a fair ball hits any part of the pitching machine without touching any defensive player first, the ball is dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All other runners will return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base (Rules 5.09f and 7.04a). If a fair ball is first touched by a defensive player and then hits any part of the pitching machine, it is a live ball.

D. If a fair ball touches an umpire in fair territory before it touches an infielder (including the pitcher), or touches an umpire before it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher, the ball is dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All other runners will return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base (Rules 5.09f and 7.04a).

E. A thrown ball that hits any part of the pitching machine is a live ball.

10. Infield fly rule – There is NO INFIELD FLY RULE.

11. Bunting – Bunting is allowed. NOTE: Slash bunting (when the player fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing) is not allowed. PENALTY – The batter is out, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.

12. Courtesy runner – Catchers may have courtesy runners run for them every time that they reach base. Each courtesy runner used must be a player who is not in the team's current lineup. A player may only be a courtesy runner once per inning.

13. Base stealing – Base stealing is not permitted. Runners may not leave their base(s) before the batter hits the ball or before the ball reaches the plate (Rule 11.07-8U (j)). The penalty (Rule 7.12) is that the runner will be called out. The batter will remain at bat or return to bat with the count that existed before the runner was called out.

14. Appeals – Appeals in accordance with Rule 7.09 that a base runner as failed to touch a required base can be made when the ball is dead.