

# Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association

OFFICIAL 2023  
Policies and Procedures

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# Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association

## OFFICIAL 2023 Policies and Procedures

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# Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association

## Policies and Procedures

### I. OBJECTIVE

Provide a safe environment for girls to develop age appropriate skills and enjoy the game of fast pitch softball with spirit of sportsmanship and honor the game.

### II. HISTORY

Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association was formed in 2004 by seven independent leagues in Tucson AZ. That first year USA Softball (USA SOFTBALL) rules were used with Baja rules changes for each age division.

In 2005, David Schreiber and Chris Mecum of Rita Ranch [now Southeast] Fastpitch authored a complete stand-alone set of rules for Baja that incorporated our objectives. In 2006, Dave Plane of Oro Valley Fast Pitch updated this rule book.

In 2007, the Baja board elected to join USA SOFTBALL as a recreational class B league.

In 2019, Chad Andrews of Oro Valley Fastpitch update this rule book to reflect BAJA's affiliation with NSA. 2019-2023 Updated all ASA to USA Softball

### III. USE OF RULE BOOKS

In event of rules differences, this booklet takes precedence over the current year USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022. The rules matrix at the end of this booklet is provided for quick reference only and should not be used as your sole source of reference.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The current year USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022 has rules for slow pitch and fast pitch, adult and youth, etc. Make sure that you are using the appropriate section for girls youth fast pitch. Look for Fastpitch & Modified Play Rules.

In the event of questions, ask first the league Umpire in Chief (UIC) for an explanation or interpretation. If the issue is not resolved, the league UIC will go to the Baja UIC for a resolution.

### IV. APPROVAL

"USA SOFTBALL Rules allows alteration of the official rules to meet local objectives for "Non-Championship Play." The Baja City Wide Tournament and All-Star Tournament are not USA SOFTBALL championship play and these rules as amended apply.

These rules were approved by the Baja board on March 6, 2019. In order to be part of Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association (hereafter referred to as "Baja"), leagues must agree to abide by the following rules, policies and procedures set forth by Baja. These policies establish the need for an elected Board of Directors for each league, as well as how teams must be formed so that players and pitchers are fairly distributed and the teams are of generally equal competitive ability. These rules also establish changes to USA SOFTBALL playing rules to accommodate recreational league play. Baja member leagues should generally consist of the following positions and associated duties as set forth in the following paragraphs:

### V. The Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as The Board)

The Board is comprised of the following elected positions: President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer and Player Agent. The Umpire-In-Chief, Safety Coordinator and any Division Representatives/Divisional Directors are appointed by the Board. Individuals can volunteer or can be nominated with their consent. However, ALL nominees for board membership MUST be an active member of the respective league they intend to serve for and must be a parent/guardian of a child or children in said league. If a nominated board member has left their position voluntarily or was removed from the board, they are not eligible to rejoin the local league board for 2 years. Each Board member will be selected by adult members of the league by way of vote. Each adult member of the league is entitled one vote for each board position. Adult members are the parents or guardians of the players. \*\*A nominating committee (or at least one non-board member) will be selected half way through the season to put together a ballot, and elections will take place at the end of the regular season. The Board will assume their responsibilities effective August 1<sup>st</sup> and

their term will expire on July 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Two representatives from each league will be asked to sit on the Baja Executive Board. Representatives are normally League presidents and one other representative, either another board member or an appointed individual.

*In order for a league to be represented on any season game schedule it must have all board positions filled prior to the start of the first practice of said season. If a board member departs the board, a replacement must be agreed upon by the remaining sitting board members within 15 days of such departure. Failure to do so will result in the league's removal from that season schedule until the vacant position is filled.*

*All Board members are required to undergo an annual background check which should be submitted to the Safety Coordinator prior to the commencement of the season's activities. Existing background checks remain in effect through fall ball.*

#### **A. Board Member Duties:**

**1. President.** The President in cooperation with the Secretary shall establish the agenda for all duly noticed Board Meetings. When present, the president shall preside over Board Meetings. The President will only vote when a tie exists after calling for a second vote. The President shall immediately suspend any individual from further League participation for inappropriate adult behavior pending the outcome of the entire Board's action. The President is responsible for all League assets. The President will countersign with the Secretary or Vice President, all League checks. The President may become a team staff member.

**2. Vice President.** The Vice President shall, in the absence of the President, preside over Board meetings. The Vice President shall immediately suspend any individual from further League participation for inappropriate adult behavior pending the outcome of the entire Board's action. The Vice President is in charge of the Fall Ball Program. The Vice President is in charge of all fundraising programs and events. The Vice President will countersign with the President or Secretary all League checks. If the Safety Director has not been appointed by January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Vice President will be the interim Safety Director until the Board appoints a Safety Director. The Vice President may become a team staff member.

**3. Treasurer.** The Treasurer is the League's Chief Financial Officer. The Treasurer must make certain that the League has a federal tax identification number on file with the Internal Revenue Service. The Treasurer will establish methods by which standard accounting principles will be used for League financial transactions. The Treasurer with the Board approval will establish the annual League budget. The Treasurer will maintain the League checking account and will issue League checks only after the expenditures have been approved by a majority vote of the Board. Under no circumstances will the Treasurer ever be a signor on a League account. The Treasurer will reconcile the League account on a monthly basis and submit a financial report at each Board meeting. Any individual receiving \$600 or more from the League for services will necessitate that the Treasurer file a 1099-MISC and summary form 1096 with the Internal Revenue Service. The Treasurer will file annual report in a timely manner with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The Treasurer may become a team staff member.

**4. Secretary.** The Secretary shall take all Board Meeting minutes. The Secretary shall provide Board members with a copy of the agenda at each Board Meeting. At the start of each Board Meeting the Secretary will present the minutes from the previous meeting for correction, additions and approval. The Secretary will establish the League's two signature checking account. The signors of said account will be the President, Vice President and Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for dispersion of League information. The Secretary shall assist the Nominating Committee with the tally of votes for the election of Board Members and announce the results no later than one week after the closing date of the election. The Secretary may become a team staff member.

**5. Player Agent.** The Player Agent is the representative of all girls in the League and will be responsible to ensure that all girls are treated in a respectful and just manner. The Player Agent shall never manage, coach or chaperone any regular season League team or All Star team unless approved by the BAJA board. Even if the Player Agent resigns after the start of the season, the Player Agent remains ineligible to manage, coach or chaperone any team. The Player Agent will supervise all player and adult volunteer registration. The Player Agent will verify each girl's League eligibility through two current documentations of residency. The Player Agent will keep registration information confidential and keep possession of the registration forms. The Player Agent may release registration information to the Board. The Player Agent will conduct the team draw and the All Star Selection Team Meetings. The Player Agent shall immediately suspend any individual from further League participation for inappropriate adult behavior pending the outcome of the entire Board's action. Any charges of possible mistreatment are thoroughly investigated by the Player Agent. The Player Agent shall inform the Board in writing of the results of the investigation. The Player Agent will report any form of injury of a player to the Board. The player agent will be responsible for ensuring that every person in the League has a signed Code of Conduct on file. The Player Agent may umpire.

**6. Umpire in Chief.** The Umpire In Chief shall be appointed by the Board prior to the start of the spring season. The Umpire in Chief is a Voting Member with voting membership beginning no earlier than January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season. The Umpire In Chief is the official interpreter of the League playing rules. The Umpire in Chief will direct the League's Umpire Program including the ongoing training of all League umpires. Prior to the start of the season, the Umpire in Chief will conduct an Umpire Instructional Meeting with the League umpires. The Umpire in Chief will schedule umpires to games. The Umpire in Chief will officiate on a needs basis. The Umpire in Chief will coordinate with the BAJA Executive UIC.

**7. Safety Director.** The Safety Director shall be appointed by the Board prior to the start of the spring season. The Safety Director is a Voting Member with voting membership beginning no earlier than January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season. The Safety Director is in charge of the safety program for the League. The Safety Director will ensure that the Board has obtained insurance for the League. Prior to the start of the season, the Safety Director will personally visit and approve each team's practice site. The Safety Director will advise each and every manager to complete an Incident Report which can be downloaded at the Bollinger website in the event of accident or injuries. The Safety Director will provide the parents of an injured player with the relevant insurance claim information.

## VI. Registration

Registration is open to anyone ages 4 1/2 - 18. Registration dates will be set by each league's Board and will be advertised by way of signage, posters, school flyers, web sites, and mailings to previous player families. If permitted, off-site registrations will be conducted at area business establishments. Several registration dates will be available so there is ample opportunity for anyone desiring to play.

Baja's "everyone plays" philosophy dictates that, if a player is turned away from a league because the age division is full, then it MUST be considered full for all players in that age division for that league. Teams must be formed by a cutoff date established by the Baja Executive Board Umpire in Chief to ensure an interleague game schedule may be promulgated before the start of the season.

- A. Boundaries:** Boundaries for each league are based on the neighborhood public school listing found in Appendix III of this document. A player's school, for boundary purposes is the public school that she would attend based on her primary residence, which may **not** match the school she actually attends. A player living in an "Open" area may register with whatever league she chooses. If a player wishes to play in a league other than the one she is bound to by her primary residence, she must obtain a written release from the league president and present it to the president of the league in which she wishes to play. If a player cannot obtain a release, they may appeal to the Baja Executive Board. As a general rule, the Executive Board defers to the independent leagues to make release decisions and, only under extreme circumstances, would the Executive Board choose to intervene.

*NOTE 1: A player that has been granted a release to play in a league, other than the one to which she is bound, is **not** eligible for All-Stars and must sign a waiver at registration acknowledging this ineligibility. To allow for reasonable transition to home leagues, especially for older players who may have been out of boundaries for a longer period of time, the effective dates for NOTE 1 are as follows: Spring 2014: All new and returning players registering in 8U; All new players registering in 10U and above Spring 2014: All returning players registering in 10U Spring 2015: All returning players registering in 12U and 14U The term, "new", refers to a player who did not play the previous spring season for the same league she is attempting to register with in the current spring. The term, "returning", refers to a player who in the previous spring season played for the same league in which she is attempting to register with in the current spring.*

*NOTE 2: If a player is turned away from a league because the league is full, then they are free to register with another league and they are eligible for All-Stars with the league they register. A release is not required in this situation. However, the league president of the accepting league must receive a letter signed and dated from the president of the league to which the player is geographically bound stating that their league is full. The player is expected to return to her home league the following season.*

*NOTE 3: All-Star eligibility is not affected when leagues agree to pool players together to make a single team, due to an insufficient number of players available in individual leagues to form a team. It is expected that each player will return to their home leagues the following season.*

### **B. Player Agent Responsibilities**

The league Player Agent is responsible for coordinating and conducting the league registration process. The Player Agent shall act in accordance with the league's by-laws, rules of the league, and directives of the Board. The Player Agent's primary responsibility is to act in the best interest of the players.

### **C. Registration Fees**

A registration fee as set by The Board, shall accompany each registration form before a player is permitted to participate.

### **D. Player Family Volunteer Hours**

Family member may be asked to work volunteer hours in the league snack bar which may be during some of their daughters' games. This will be coordinated by each team's chaperone or manager, or snack bar manager. Each team may also be asked to work at least one day to clean the fields during the season. This will also be coordinated by the manager.

#### **E. Player Age Determination**

At the time of registration, the Player Agent and designees of The Board shall have the responsibility of determining player age and qualifications for each division by way of verification of date of birth. Copies of certified Birth Certificates must accompany each registration form for a new player to the league or any returning player in question.

#### **F. Player Age/Division Assignment**

Registration is open to all girls ages 4 1/2-18. The following is a list of Baja Softball division/age requirements. The league will be broken into divisions based on date of birth;

- 1. 6U Division** - Consists of players aged four and a half (4½) through (6) years old as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
- 2. 8U Division** - Consists of players eight (8) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
- 3. 10U Division** - Consists of players ten (10) years or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
- 4. 12U Division** - Consists of players twelve (12) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
- 5. 14U Division** - Consists of players fourteen (14) years old or under as of December 31st of the previous year of play.
- 6. 16U/18U Divisions** can be formed after the High Schools have selected their teams. Should there be enough interest, these divisions will be subject to the same procedures as the lower divisions.

#### **G. Specific Request Rule:**

- 1. 6U Division:** Players in the 6U division may select the teammates with whom they want to play (i.e., managers may recruit and form their own teams).
- 2. 8U – 18U divisions:** Beginning at the 8U level, our philosophy is to establish balanced teams so that softball games will be competitive among teams in each division. Players in the 8U through 18U divisions may request to be teamed with a "team buddy" as described below, **or** they may request to play for their previous spring season coach or manager. It is not a guarantee that players will be placed with their team buddy or with their previous coach, but leagues should do their best to accommodate such requests. Beyond that, teams are created based on a process which strives for a balance of experience/skill on each team within a given division. The process considers age, years of experience, All-Star experience, experience at designated positions (pitcher, catcher), and other considerations that the Board deems necessary in order to achieve team balance. For this reason, not all "team buddies" may end up together on teams.
  - (a) **Buddy Request:** Any player may select **one** other player as a buddy, provided their buddy selects them also, and that the buddying does not pair up a returning age-level All-Star pitcher with another pitcher, unless the pairing up of the two pitchers has no effect on the competitive balance of the teams.
  - (b) **Staffing Request:** To encourage parent volunteerism and to promote harmony on the team staff, staff members may request to team up provided they bring no more than 3 players into the draw. The Board must evaluate and approve any staffing requests to ensure that competitive balance is maintained. Any players that the staff members bring are referred to as "reserved players". Examples of this include three staff members with one

player each, or two staff members - one with one player, and the other with two players (e.g. two sisters, or a daughter and her buddy). If it is at the league's discretion that staff members are placed together, the staff members' players would not be considered "reserved players" and those staff members would only be held to the buddy rule as stated in paragraph 2a.

**H. Playing Up/Down:** Players may opt to play up or down one age division. The Player Agent must be notified at the time of registration and it will be indicated on the registration form. It may also be necessary, in order to fill out teams or coaching positions in an upper division, to allow a small number of qualified players to be moved to a more advanced division. **Players playing up a division are eligible for All-Star consideration in the division in which they played; players playing down a division are not eligible for all-star consideration.**

**1. Playing Up:** Placement in an upper division requires that the following criteria be met:

- a. Player must have the signed permission of the parent or guardian to include acknowledgement of All-Star restrictions.
- b. Player must have the consent of the Player Agent.

**2. Playing Down:** It may be necessary, due to safety or coaching considerations, to allow players lacking sufficient softball experience to be placed in a lower age division. Placement in a lower division requires that the following criteria be met:

- a. Player must have the signed permission of the parent or guardian, to include acknowledgement of All-Star ineligibility.
- b. Player must be within one year of the lower division in which they are to play.
- c. Player must have the consent of the Player Agent.

**I. Late Registration:** The Player Agent, with the Board's concurrence, will place players that register after the team selection process, on teams based on the player's known abilities, personal development, team needs and equality of teams within the division. Any new player that has not been assessed cannot be drafted and will be randomly selected and placed on a team.

## **VII. Player Evaluation**

With the exception of the 6U division, it is suggested that leagues conduct player evaluations for each division to determine how to rank their players and form balanced teams. After leagues have evaluated and ranked their players, every effort must be made to ensure teams are balanced with an equal number of inexperienced, experienced, and highly experienced players.

## **VIII. Team Selection**

With the exception of the 6U Division, teams will consist of a minimum of 9 players. The number of teams will be determined by the Player Agent, taking into consideration the number of players registered for each division. The 6U teams will be formed so as to ensure an equal number of players on each team. The remaining division teams will be formed by way of a divisional draft or draw process, separately conducted for each division, with the ultimate goal of providing an evenly competitive division of teams.

**A. 6U Division:** Teams in the 6U Division will be formed by the Player Agent on a random basis taking into consideration "buddy requests" or fully formed teams. (The main objective in the 6U Division is that the players have FUN and learn the basic rules of the game.)

**B. 8U-18U Divisions:** Prior to conducting either a draft or draw, the player agent should have all the registration forms for all the players sorted into categories (pitchers, catchers, returning All Stars, etc.) and ranked by the players' ability and age. So as to keep teams as evenly balanced as possible, each team will have no more than three players that can be



"reserved" players. These "reserved" players are automatically placed on any given team prior to the draw (In the case of coaches having more than one daughter on a team, exceptions can be made as long as it does not affect the overall balance of the teams.) Teams having no representative at the time of team drafts will be represented by the Player Agent or an individual who does not have a daughter playing, or personal interest in the division.

**1. Pitchers:** Because pitchers are essential to the game and have a tremendous impact on the competitiveness of a team, an even distribution of pitchers among teams in the division is critical. The Player Agent will rank the pitchers to the best of their abilities. Leagues may choose to hold pre-season pitching evaluations if needed to help with rankings. The pitcher rankings will be reviewed and discussed by the Board. The highest skilled pitchers should be slotted first in the team selection process.

**2. Manager/Coach/Reserved Player:** A reserved player is a player brought into the draw as a result of a requested pairing of staff members. The pairing of staff members is subject to Board Approval and "reserved" players are ranked in ability order as determined by the player agent. Manager's daughters, coach's daughters and reserved players are counted as a "pick" during the round involving their skill level.

**3. Draw Method:** Managers (or other team representative) arrive at the draw and are asked to take a number from a hat. This becomes their team number and the order in which they sit. The players are 'given' to managers in a serpentine manner, with the highest skilled pitchers drawn first and the youngest, least experienced players drawn last. Prior to the draw, the managers' daughters, coaches' daughters, reserved players, and approved buddies are placed on the correct teams in the appropriate skill/experience level. Otherwise, manager 1 is given the first player in the draw; manager 2 the next, manager 3 the next, and so forth. The last manager is given two players in a row and then the draw continues backwards, until manager 1 receives their 2 players in a row, and then the process moves forward again. This method goes on until all players are drawn. If, during the draw process, the next team in line already has a player at the skill level being drawn, then the team is skipped and the player goes to the next available team. If a drawn player has an approved buddy, then that buddy is placed on the team's roster at the appropriate skill level. If the next player to be drawn has requested to play for their previous spring season coach, every attempt will be made to honor that request, provided team balance is not adversely affected. A player that has their previous season coach request granted may not also bring along a buddy.

**4. Draft Method:** Managers (or other team representative) arrive at the draft and are asked to take a number from a hat. This becomes their team number and the order in which they sit. The managers take their picks in a serpentine manner, with the highest skilled pitchers offered first and the youngest, least experienced players offered last. Prior to the draft, the managers' daughters, coaches' daughters, reserved players, and approved buddies are placed on the correct teams in the appropriate skill/experience level. Manager 1 is given the first pick in the draft; manager 2 the next, manager 3 the next, and so forth. The last manager is given two picks in a row and then the draft continues backwards, until manager 1 receives their 2 picks in a row, and then the process moves forward again. This method goes on until all players are drafted. If, during the draft process, the next team in line already has a player at the skill level being drafted, then the team is skipped and the pick goes to the next available team. If a drafted player has an approved buddy, then that buddy is placed on the team's roster at the appropriate skill level. The Player Agent will indicate any player's special requests (other than approved buddies) as it relates to playing on the same team with other players or as it relates to playing for their previous spring season coach. We can encourage managers to honor these requests; however, no guarantees can be made.

**5. Relatives:** Relatives playing within the same division shall be treated as buddies and will be placed on the same team, unless otherwise requested by the parents or guardians

**6. Team Selection Attendance:** The leagues may opt to restrict attendance of the team selection meeting to managers and board members only.

**7. Trades (Optional per League):** In order to accommodate “Specific Requests” each team will be allowed one (1) trade of like draft choice or lesser immediately following the regular draft. The Board will encourage every attempt to get the “specific request” players together on one team.

**The team selection process is complete when all eligible players have been assigned to a team.**

**8. Privacy:** ALL information presented in the team selection meeting is to be treated with the utmost care and respect for every player in the league. Discussion of ANY player related issue outside of the team selection meeting must not be perceived as contrary to the mission statements of Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association and its associated leagues.

**9. Notification of Players:** All team rosters are subject to approval by the Board. Roster changes may be made if any clear and egregious imbalances occurred during the selection process. Under no circumstances shall Players be notified of their selection until the Player Agent has given approval and team rosters have been issued to the Managers. Upon notification of approval, Managers shall notify their Players within three (3) days.

## **IX. Staff (Managers/Coaches/Assistant Managers/Substitute Registered Coach)**

Each team will be staffed with not less than one female Manager, not less than one Coach, a substitute registered coach and a female Assistant Manager. Every staff must consist of at least 2 females. Each adult league member or volunteer age 18 or over that is interested in being a Manager or a Coach must contact the Board at the earliest opportunity. A background check form must be completed and submitted to the Board. The Assistant Manager position will be filled by a female adult league member whose child or relation is a member of a particular team. Every opportunity to fulfill requests will be made but are dependent upon the number of players registered in each division. If a situation exists wherein there are more volunteers than teams, assignment of staff will be made on a performance or experience decision by the Board. Prior year manager/coach evaluations will be used to determine eligibility.

Each team will be under the authority of an adult staff member during all team functions. A female adult staff member **must** be present at all team activities.

NOTE: A background check must be completed and results submitted to the Safety Coordinator for each adult staff member prior to the commencement of pre-season practice. Should a staff member volunteer after the pre-season activities have commenced, he or she must submit their background check results to the Safety Coordinator prior to any involvement in team activities involving the players.

### **A. Manager/Coach Responsibilities**

1. To oversee the team members to ensure their experience is optimized. The Manager is to utilize the Division Representative and Player Agent to enhance a player's experience;
2. To teach basic softball fundamentals, while displaying patience and composure to the team;
3. To provide a positive experience for all Baja players and families;
4. To agree to adhere to the Baja division rules and regulations;
5. For the actions of the players and spectators during games and practices;
6. To attend any meetings, clinics and training programs conducted by the league;
7. Be familiar with and enforce all safety rules;
8. To provide a flow of league information to the parents/guardians of players through parent meetings, the first is to be prior to or in conjunction with the first pre-season practice;

9. For all uniforms; equipment; and keys. Equipment and keys are to be turned into the league no later than one week following the official closing of the season;
10. For signing the official scorebook at the end of the game and returning it to the designated location;
11. Field and equipment preparation and cleanliness;
12. Snack bar staffing (if league requires).

#### **B. Assistant Manager Responsibilities**

1. Assist the Manager/Coaches when asked;
2. Ensure safety of the players while in the dugout and monitor the comings and goings of the players during the game, e.g.: restroom breaks by the players must be monitored for player safety;
3. Act in the capacity of the parent/guardian's representative.

#### **C. Scorekeeper Responsibilities**

Scorekeepers are required to obtain their team's scorebook and when "home team", obtain the official line-ups of both teams and maintain the game activities in the "official scorebook." This will also include the recorded number of innings pitched by each player. At the end of the game, signatures are to be obtained from staff members from both teams. Following the game, the "official scorekeeper" is to return the "official scorebook" to a home team staff member.

### **X. Practice and Game Guidelines**

#### **A. Practice Guidelines**

1. No more than four (4) Games / Practices may be conducted in a calendar week during the Spring and Fall seasons. This rule may be waived at each leagues' discretion during local inter-league tournaments and All-Star season.
2. No player shall be left unattended at the field/practice area; however, transportation of each player is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian.

#### **B. Game Guidelines**

1. Remain inside the playing field during the course of the game with the exception of warming up players and restroom breaks with the permission of the Manager/ Coach/ Chaperone.
2. **Early Departure of a Player:** If a player departs the game early, the opposing team staff, the umpire and the official scorekeeper must first be notified.
3. **Substitute Registered Coach:** On occasion, a substitute registered coach will fill in for a registered coach's absence.
4. **Protests:** Protests must be noted in the official scorebook by both team Scorekeepers and the Umpire. All protests must be submitted in writing to the Umpire-in-Chief within 24 hours of the end of the game. Protests decisions will be made by the Umpire-in-Chief, The Board, and the Player Agent within one week of the protested game. If the protest is upheld, the game will be rescheduled as soon as possible. It is important that the Scorekeeper notes the following: the time; the inning; and the player at bat at the time of protest. For further information, refer to the USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022.

**C. Game Forfeiture/Time Outs:** See Division Rules.

**D. Termination of Games:** See USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022.

**E. Staff Ejections:** In the event a staff member is ejected from the game by an Umpire, the staff member will be required to leave the playing area. A special board meeting will be held within four days of the occurrence to determine if any disciplinary action will be administered. The staff member will be suspended from Baja activities pending any board action and the Executive Board will be notified.

**F. Injuries:** Any player injury sustained during any team activity must be reported to the Safety Coordinator and/or Player Agent along with all necessary paperwork.

**G. Safety/Use of Equipment:**

1. Players must wear protective helmets at all times while batting or running bases. **Helmet must have USA SOFTBALL approved face mask chin straps. This rule applies to all age groups, even 6U.**
2. Catchers must wear a protective mask when warming up pitchers and all protective catchers' gear while catching on the playing field.
3. Only USA SOFTBALL approved equipment will be permitted.
4. Players must wear protective gear when sliding; however, no staff may require the purchase of sliding gear by a player;
5. No jewelry may be worn by players during practices or games and hair must be secured away from player's faces.

**H. Make-Up/Rescheduled Games:** Staff will work together along with the Umpire-In-Chief to re-schedule games. If a team cannot field players and both team staff members agree to reschedule the game and by the end of the season, the game cannot be played, the team requesting the rescheduled game will take the loss.

**I. Maintaining/Signing the Official Scorebook:** Staff are responsible for assuring there is an official scorekeeper for the game; ensuring opposing team staff and the Umpire are provided official line-ups at least 5 minutes prior to game time; signing the official scorebook at the end of the game; and returning it to the designated area following the game.

**J. Substitution and Batting Line-up:** Each team is responsible for providing the official batting line-up and substitution plan to the opposing team and the umpire at least 5 minutes prior to the game. The substitution and batting line-up will provide the batting order as well as the jersey numbers of the players who will be on the bench each inning. See "Substitution and Playing time for 8U, 10U, 12U, AND 14U") on p14.

**K. An Umpire's Failure to Appear:** If an Umpire fails to appear before game time, staff from both teams can appoint a substitute to stand in with the appropriate gear.

## **BAJA TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT**

As the Baja organization is dedicated to providing an environment for players, managers, coaches, and other staff and volunteers that is conducive to good sportsmanship, respect for each other, positive support, and the development of friendships in the spirit of competition, all participants are required to sign a Code of Conduct Pledge prior to the season. There are 2 versions of the pledge, one for coaches/managers and other adults who will be officially involved within the league, and one for the supporting parents. These forms are included as Appendices to this manual (Page 28-31).

## **SUBSTITUTION AND PLAYING TIME FOR 8U, 10U, 12U, AND 14U**

- a) All players must play at least two (2) innings on defense within the first 4 innings.
- b) No player may sit on the bench for a second inning until all players have sat on the bench for one inning. Example: On a 12-player team, ALL players will sit out one of the first four innings.
- c) No player may sit on the bench for two innings in a row unless it is her choice because of illness or she has been removed for injury.

Note to Rules a-c:

The participation rules above may be waived for disciplinary reasons (example: player fails to attend practices). This can take the form of reduced time in the field. However, the player must play at least one inning in the field in order to be in the batting order. In these cases, the Manager must notify the opposing team coach/manager and umpire prior to the start of the game. In addition, the Manager must provide the Board with a letter or an email of explanation for the disciplinary action taken within 48 hours after the start of game time. Not conforming to this process will be considered a violation of the Code of Conduct, and those involved will be subject to the review process detailed there.

d) 8U Only - No player may play two defensive innings in a row in the outfield. An infield to outfield to bench or reverse rotation will meet this requirement. An outfield to bench to outfield rotation does not meet this rule.

e) 8U Only - Once the pitcher has completed her innings pitched, she will either be placed in the outfield or sit the bench the next defensive inning. Example: Player pitches one inning, she plays outfield or sits the bench the next inning. Player pitches first two innings, she plays outfield or sits the bench the third inning. Player pitches first and third inning, she plays outfield or sits the bench the second and fourth inning and must meet the requirements of the participation rule.

f) Unlimited re-entry is permitted to any position as long as rules above and rules affecting pitchers are followed.

g) Any player who arrives late to the game may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up if she arrives prior to the start of the third inning. In this case, she will be entered at the bottom of the batting order and take her normal turn at bat.

h) A player arriving during the course of the game and after the start of the third inning may enter the game only if the first listed batter in the line-up has not yet come to bat twice in that game.

i) There is no penalty incurred by a player leaving the game early. The league will consider any attempt on the part of a coach or manager to use this rule interpretation to avoid batting a player in order to gain a competitive advantage to be among the most egregious of violations of the rules and principles of the league. Penalty: forfeit and suspension.

# Baja Arizona Softball Association

## 2023 Official League Rules

### 6 & Under Division

Softball is a fairly complex game and the minimum knowledge required to even play the game, much less master the skills, is significant. Baja 6U T-ball simplifies the game significantly so the players can learn basic skills, such as catching and throwing, batting, and running bases. 6U T-ball is completely developmental. That is, the entire purpose is to teach basic skills and give the players a positive experience. To that end, there is no scoring, no winners or losers, and everyone gets to play and bat every inning. It is important to keep these points in mind as they dictate the way coaching is done.

This section details major differences between 6U T-ball and other age divisions. Of course, the essence of softball is maintained, but those rules resulting from the competitive nature of softball are eliminated.

The USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022 does not have a 6-Under division. The following rules will be used for this division.

**1) PLAYERS** - A 6U team can field between five and ten players.

#### 2) SAFETY

- a) No jewelry may be worn during any practice or game. This includes, but is not limited to, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or rings. Exception: Medical alert bracelets, medical alert necklaces, and non-removable silver baby bracelets are allowed to be worn, if covered. If a player is found wearing jewelry, her manager or coach will instruct her to remove it.
- b) Socks must both cover the ankles and be uniform in appearance for each team.
- c) Helmets that include chin straps and face masks are mandatory for the defensive player standing beside the coach/pitcher and all batters and runners.

#### 3) FIELD

- a) If possible, bases should be placed at 50 feet.
- b) An arc is drawn on the field from one base line to the other at a radius of 10 feet from the back tip of home plate. This is the foul arc.

#### 4) EQUIPMENT

- a) In addition to Official Softball bats, bats designated "T-Ball" may be used.
- b) The softball must be an optic yellow 10" Reduced Impact Force ball.
- c) Rubber-cleated shoes are not required, but are recommended.

#### 5) REGULATION GAME

- a) The time limit is 1 hour.
- b) No game may last longer than four (4) innings.
- c) There will be no official scorekeeping. No runs are counted in 6U play.

#### 6) OFFENSE

- a) A team bats the entire lineup each inning, regardless of number of players or number of outs made by the defense. After the last player in the batting order has batted and the play is over, the half inning is complete.
- b) The batter hits the ball off a standard batting tee.
- c) At the discretion of the batter's coach, the coach may slow pitch to the batter from the pitching area for a maximum of four pitches. If the batter has not hit the ball fair after four pitches, she must hit off of the tee.

- d) A hit ball that stops between home plate and the foul arc is considered a foul ball.
- e) Once a batter hits the ball she and any other runners on base can advance:
  - i) One base, if the ball stops in the infield or is touched by an infielder.
  - ii) Any number of bases, if the ball goes to the outfield untouched, until the ball is returned to the infield.
  - iii) EXCEPTION: When the last batter in the lineup hits the ball the runners continue to run the bases and through home. During this time the defense can continue to try to make an out.
- f) On an overthrow play at first base, the batter-runner will not be allowed to advance.
- g) All other runners must stop at the base they are approaching if the ball is overthrown at first.
- h) There will be neither stealing of bases nor sliding.
- i) Adult staff members can be placed as base coaches near first and third base, but must remain in foul territory and not interfere with play.
- j) An additional adult staff member may be positioned behind home plate to place the ball on the tee, retrieve foul balls, and coach the batter.

## **7) DEFENSE**

- a) Players generally occupy those positions that are common to all softball. For the purposes of development, it is recommended that positions be filled in the following order, depending on the number of players present.
  - i) Infield (First, Second, Third, and Shortstop).
  - ii) Pitcher (This player does not pitch, but occupies the pitching position as a defensive player)  
*NOTE: Pitchers are required to wear a batting helmet.*
  - iii) Outfield (Left, Left Center, Right, Right Center).
  - iv) Catcher (there is no catcher used in the 6-Under division)  
*NOTE: There is no requirement that any particular position be filled. The team staff can place players as desired to achieve specific goals.*
- d) The defense may have a maximum of two staff members on the field, generally placed behind the infield. They are allowed to coach even during a play, but must not interfere with the ball or the players.
- e) The defense can get the batter or runners “out” in any of the usual ways – force out, tag out, fly ball, etc. When a batter or runner is gotten out, she leaves the field and returns to the dugout. There is no limit on the number of outs in any inning (see Offense).
- f) There is no in-field fly rule.



# Baja Arizona Softball Association

## 2023 Official League Rules

### 8 & Under Division

The USA Softball Official Rules of Softball of 2023 do not have an 8-Under division. The BAJA league rules, as approved by the BAJA board in 2014, will be used for the 8-Under division.

#### 1) SAFETY

- a) No jewelry may be worn during any practice or game. This includes, but is not limited to, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or rings. Exception: Medical alert bracelets, medical alert necklaces, and non-removable silver baby bracelets are allowed to be worn, if covered. If a player is found wearing jewelry, the umpire will instruct her to remove it.
- b) Chin straps are mandatory on all helmets in addition to required facemasks.

#### 2) FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

- a) The game ball will be an optic yellow 11" .47 COR reduced impact ball (examples: Worth RIF Level 1, Pro-Nine Level 1 RIF).
- b) Pitching Distance will be 32 feet.
- c) Bases will be at 55 feet if the field has acceptable anchors, otherwise, 60 feet.

#### 3) REGULATION GAME

- a) No new inning may begin after 1hr, 20min. Time begins at the conclusion of the home plate pre-game meeting and both teams should be ready to play. The game will be stopped at 1hr, 40min after start and score revert to the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat in the bottom of the inning and is ahead. The third inning must be completed if unfinished.
- b) No game may last longer than four (4) innings or less than three (3) innings.
- c) Games may end in a tie.
- d) One umpire will be scheduled to officiate each game.

#### 4) OFFENSE

- a) All players in attendance are listed on the batting order and it will remain the same through the game.
- b) The batter must have one foot in and one foot out of the batter's box when receiving signals from the coach's box.
- c) The batter is out on the third strike, even if the catcher drops it.
- d) If a team begins a game with only eight or nine players, no outs will be assessed for playing short on offense.
- e) Bunting is allowed off of the player pitcher only.

#### 5) RUN LIMIT

- a) Each team shall be limited to scoring three (3) runs in their half inning during the first three innings of play. Under this rule each half inning is over when the defense makes the third out or the offense scores their third run.
- b) No "continuation runs" shall count. A play in progress is allowed to be completed after the third run has scored; however, no runs in excess of three (in the first three innings) shall count in the game score.

#### 6) DEFENSE

- a) There will be ten (10) defensive players in the field, and four of those players will be positioned behind the base line.
- b) A team must field a minimum of eight players. Fewer than eight players constitute a forfeit. [This rule does not prohibit both managers from loaning or borrowing players to complete/start the game if mutually acceptable.]

- c) If a team is short players, the opposing team is not obligated to play short-handed.
- d) An adult from the defensive team may be positioned behind the catcher to assist in returning the ball to the pitcher and speeding up the game. This adult is not allowed to give any direction or assistance.
- e) There is no infield fly rule.
- f) There will be only **one** defensive time out allowed per inning and a total of three per game.
- g) Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed (subject to the rules on minimum playing time). Each team is required to submit their substitution plan (must include positions played for 8u) to the opposing manager and home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. Adjustments are allowed during game play provided the opposing team and umpire are notified and that minimum play rules are not violated.
- h) No player may play two defensive innings in a row in the outfield. An infield to outfield to bench or reverse rotation will meet this requirement. An outfield to bench to outfield rotation does not meet this rule.
- i) Once the pitcher has completed her innings pitched, she will either be placed in the outfield or sit the bench the next defensive inning. Example: Player pitches one inning, she plays outfield or sits the bench the next inning. Player pitches first two innings, she plays outfield or sits the bench the third inning. Player pitches first and third inning, she plays outfield or sits the bench the second and fourth inning and must meet the requirements of the participation rule.

## **7) WALKS**

- a) There will be no walks. In the event the player-pitcher pitches four balls, the designated adult coach/manager of the batting team will enter the game. At this time the strike count will remain the same and the coach will continue to pitch until the batter either hits the ball in fair territory, or strikes out, or the batter receives four called balls from the adult pitcher.
- b) If the adult pitcher pitches four (4) called balls, the batter is out. If the batter fouls off a pitch, her at-bat continues. A batter cannot strike out on a foul ball, regardless of the number of pitches she receives.

## **8) ADULT PITCHERS**

- a) The adult pitcher must pitch from the pitcher's plate. The player-pitcher stays in the circle while the adult is pitching, and must play no closer to the batter than the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released.
- b) The adult pitcher must make every reasonable effort to get out of the way of a batted ball and/or defensive players. If the adult pitcher is hit by a batted ball, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and all other runners advance if forced.
- c) The adult pitcher may not actively coach the batter or runners while on the field.

## **9) HIT BY PITCH**

- a) Any batter hit by a pitch not hitting the ground first thrown by a player-pitcher (as opposed to an adult) will be awarded first base as long as the batter makes an effort to get out of the way. If the ball bounces off the ground before hitting the batter, a ball is called and the batter is not awarded first base. If the adult-pitcher hits a batter with a pitched ball, and the batter swings at the ball, the batter will be charged a "strike." If the batter does not swing, but is hit by the adult-pitcher, it is a "ball."

## **10) BASE RUNNER / OVER THROW**

- a) There will be no stealing of bases or home plate.
- b) There will be no sliding. If a runner slides, she will be called out.
- c) A base runner may leave the base after the ball is hit.
- d) If the ball is hit inside the base line, runners may advance with liability of being put out to the next base until the ball is returned to the control of the pitcher standing in the pitching circle. If the ball is hit beyond the base line, runners may advance to the next base with liability of being put out until the ball is in control of an infield player (including the pitcher or catcher) standing inside the base line. If the runner goes past the "next base" and arrives safely at one beyond the one she should have stopped at, she may be returned by the umpire to the one she should have stopped at without liability of being put out. If the runner goes past the "next base," she may be put out while between bases.
- e) Tagging up on a hit ball that is caught in the air is not allowed.
- f) When a fielder makes a throw towards a base, the batter/runner and all other runners must stop at the base they are approaching when the ball is released, and/or the ball ends up in foul territory. This includes an overthrow to the catcher. The purpose of this rule is to teach the fundamentals of the game by encouraging fielders to go after lead runners, when appropriate, while minimizing the risk of poor throws made by developing players. The reason that it is on release of the ball, rather than when the ball crosses into foul territory, is to ensure that base coaches are teaching the fundamentals of base running. This means running all the way through first base and stopping on the other bases when, if playing at a more experienced level, risk of being put out would be very high.

## **11) PITCHING**

- a) No pitcher may pitch more than 2 innings per game. One pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.
- b) Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning must be removed from pitching and may not return to pitch in the same inning or the next inning. A ball bouncing off the ground does not affect this count.
- c) The strike zone is the space over home plate, plus any part of the ball that is between the top of the batter's shoulders and the bottom of the knees as the batter assumes their natural batting stance.
- d) If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during her delivery, a ball is declared on the batter and the ball is dead.
- e) The umpire may warn the pitcher and advise the coach to correct any illegal pitching style on the first occurrence. After that, an illegal pitch will be called.

# Baja Arizona Softball Association

## 2023 Official League Rules

### 10 & Under Division

The USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022 will be used for Baja's 10-Under division

#### 1) SAFETY

- a) No jewelry may be worn during any practice or game. This includes, but is not limited to, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or rings. Exception: Medical alert bracelets, medical alert necklaces, and non-removable silver baby bracelets are allowed to be worn, if covered. If a player is found wearing jewelry, the umpire will instruct her to remove it.
- b) Only appropriate baseball/softball cleats may be worn to practices or games. Metal cleats are not allowed. No tennis shoes. Socks must be both knee socks and uniform in appearance for each team.
- c) Chin straps are mandatory on all helmets in addition to required facemasks.

#### 2) FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

- a) The game ball will be an optic yellow 11" raised seam ball, .470 cor., and a ball compression of 375 lbs. or under. The ball must be "USA SOFTBALL Certified."

#### 3) REGULATION GAME

- a) No new inning may begin after 1hr, 30min. Time begins at the conclusion of the home plate pre-game meeting and both teams should be ready to play. The game will be stopped at 1hr, 50min after start and score revert to the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat in the bottom of the inning and is ahead.
- b) If the visiting team is leading by 8 or more runs after 4 complete innings, the game is over. If the home team is leading by 8 or more runs after 3 1/2 innings, the game is over.
- c) No game may last longer than five (5) innings or less than three (3) innings.
- d) One plate umpire and one base umpire will be scheduled to officiate each game.

#### 4) OFFENSE

- a) All players in attendance are listed on the batting order and it will remain the same through the game. (Note: In Baja games there is no Designated Player or Flex.)
- b) The batter must have one foot in and one foot out of the batter's box when receiving signals from the coaches' box.
- c) If a team begins a game with only eight players, no outs are assessed for playing shorthanded.
- d) If a player must leave the game due to injury or other reasons she may be replaced on defense and, if she is unable to bat, her place in the batting order is skipped without penalty (no automatic out is assessed). A player who must miss a turn at bat or has been substituted for as an injured runner may not re-enter the game.

#### 5) RUN LIMIT

- a) Each team shall be limited to scoring four (4) runs in their half inning during the first three innings of play. Under this rule each and every half inning of the first three innings is over when the defense makes the third out or the offense scores their fourth run.
- b) No "continuation runs" shall count. A play in progress is allowed to be completed after the fourth run has scored, however, runs in excess of four shall not count in the game score.

#### 6) DEFENSE

- a) A team must field a minimum of eight players. Fewer than eight players constitute a forfeit. [This rule does not prohibit both managers from loaning or borrowing players to complete/start the game if mutually acceptable.]
- b) If a team is short players, the opposing team is not obligated to play short-handed.

c) There is no dropped third strike rule – batters may not advance on a dropped third strike. The batter is out whether the catcher catches the third strike or not. Runners already on base may advance at their own risk.

d) Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed (subject to the rules on minimum playing time). Each team is required to submit their substitution plan to the opposing manager and home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. Adjustments are allowed during game play provided the opposing team and umpire are notified and that minimum play rules are not violated.

## 7) BASE RUNNER

a) Runners may slide feet-first only.

b) No pinch or courtesy runners are permitted in Baja games. In the case of a runner needing to leave the game due to an injury, the player on the bench in the closest previous position in the batting order shall assume running duties. The player removed from running due to injury may not re-enter the game.

c) The batter-runner is not allowed to steal or advance to second base on the same pitch on which she receives a base on balls.

d) A runner starting on first or second base may attempt to steal or advance, other than on a batted ball, only one base per pitch.

e) A runner starting on third base may not steal home except if a play (throw to any base) is made by the catcher, or the catcher when returning the ball to the pitcher throws it anywhere other than to the pitcher, or the pitcher drops it outside of the pitcher's circle. The runner may not take home on a passed ball or wild pitch.

f) A runner attempting to steal or advance to a base beyond that to which she is allowed under c), d) or e) may be put out on a play by the defense. If not put out, once all play ceases the runner is sent back to the last base to which she is entitled.

### Situations:

(1) Runner on third leaves base when pitcher releases the ball and is half way to home. The pitch is a wild pitch or a passed ball; the catcher retrieves the ball and throws it to the pitcher; the pitcher now has the ball in the circle and the runner advances to home. This is **illegal!** The runner is put back on third base without liability to be put out.

(2) Runner on second steals third, catcher tries a throw down and ball goes into left field, runner may not come home. Reason: one base per pitch rule comes into play.

(3) Runner on third takes a lead after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, catcher tries to pick her off and the ball goes into left field. She may then come home "with liability to be put out."

(4) Runners on third and first, runner on first tries to steal second and catcher tries to pick her off. Runner on third may try to come home "with liability to be put out." Runner stealing second must stop there if safe; again one base per pitch rule applies.

(5) Runner on third, catcher throws the ball into center field while attempting to return the ball to the pitcher. Runner on third may try to come home "with liability to be put out."

(6) One out, runners on first and third, batter is walked and the runner on first advances to second; the catcher's return throw to the pitcher is wild; as the ball rolls loose outside the circle, runner now on second advances to third and runner on third goes home; batter-runner is thrown out attempting to take second. Once all play ceases, runner who began at first who is now standing on third is returned to second, and both the out and the scored run stand. Reasons: one base per pitch rule applies, a runner going beyond the one base she is entitled to advance may be put out, and a runner starting on third is entitled to advance home on the bad return throw from the catcher to the pitcher.



## **8) PITCHING**

a) No pitcher may pitch more than two innings of the first four innings per game. One pitch in an inning constitutes a whole inning.

b) Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning must be removed from pitching and may not return to pitch in the same inning or the next inning. For purposes of this rule, a pitch that contacts the ground prior to hitting the batter does not count towards the total of two hit batters; however, the batter may be awarded first base in accordance with USA SOFTBALL Rule 8, Section 1F.

c) If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during her delivery, a ball is declared on the batter and the ball is dead.

# Baja Arizona Softball Association

## 2023 Official League Rules

### 12 & Under, 14 & Under and 18 & Under Divisions

The USA Softball Official Rules of Softball 2022 will be used for Baja's 10-Under, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under, & 18-Under divisions.

#### 1) SAFETY

- a) No jewelry may be worn during any practice or game. This includes, but is not limited to, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or rings. Exception: Medical alert bracelets, medical alert necklaces, and non-removable silver baby bracelets are allowed to be worn, if covered. If a player is found wearing jewelry, the umpire will instruct her to remove it.
- b) Only appropriate baseball/softball cleats may be worn to practices or games. Metal cleats are not allowed. No tennis shoes. Socks must be both knee socks and uniform in appearance for each team.
- c) Chin straps are mandatory on all helmets in addition to required facemasks.

#### 2) FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

- a) The game ball will be a 12-inch, optic yellow, raised seam ball, .470 cor., and a ball compression of 375 lbs. or under. The ball must be "USA SOFTBALL Certified."

#### 3) REGULATION GAME

- a) No new inning may begin after 1hr, 30min. Time begins at the conclusion of the home plate pre-game meeting and both teams should be ready to play. The game will be stopped at 1hr, 50min after start and score revert to the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat in the bottom of the inning and is ahead.
- b) If the visiting team is leading by 10 or more runs after 4 complete innings, the game is over. If the home team is leading by 10 or more runs after 3 1/2 innings, the game is over.
- c) Regulation game is six (6) innings for 12U and seven (7) innings for 14U and 18U.
- d) During the regular season games, ties stand.
- e) One plate umpire and one base umpire will be scheduled to officiate each game.

#### 4) OFFENSE

- a) All players in attendance are listed on the batting order, and it will remain the same through the game. (Note: In Baja games there is no Designated Player or Flex.)
- b) The batter must have one foot in and one foot out of the batter's box when receiving signals from the coaches' box.
- c) If a team begins a game with only eight players, no outs are assessed for playing shorthanded.
- d) If a player must leave the game due to injury or other reasons she may be replaced on defense and, if she is unable to bat, her place in the batting order is skipped without penalty (no automatic out is assessed). A player who must miss a turn at bat or has been substituted for as an injured runner may not re-enter the game.

#### 5) RUN LIMIT

- a) Each team shall be limited to scoring four (4) runs in their half of the first three innings of play. Under this rule an inning is over when the defense makes the third out or the offense scores their fourth run.
- b) No "continuation runs" shall count. A play in progress is allowed to be completed after the fourth run has scored, however, runs in excess of four shall not count in the game score.



## **6) DEFENSE**

- a) There will be nine (9) defensive players in the field.
- b) A team must field a minimum of eight players. Having fewer than eight players constitutes a forfeit. [This rule does not prohibit both managers from loaning or borrowing players to complete/start the game if mutually acceptable.]
- c) If a team is short players, the opposing team is not obligated to play short-handed.
- d) Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed (subject to the rules on minimum playing time). Each team is required to submit their substitution plan to the opposing manager and home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. Adjustments are allowed during game play provided the opposing team and umpire are notified and that minimum play rules are not violated.

## **7) BASE RUNNER**

- a) Runners may slide feet-first only. A girl sliding head-first will be called out. Diving back to a base from a very short distance away is not considered head-first sliding and is legal.
- b) Pinch or courtesy runners are NOT permitted in Baja games. In the case of a runner needing to leave the game due to an injury, the player on the bench in the closest previous position in the batting order shall assume running duties. The player removed from running due to injury may not re-enter the game.

## **8) PITCHING**

- a) No pitcher may pitch more than three (3) for 12U or four (4) for 14U/18U of the first five (5) innings of a game. If a game goes 6 or more innings, all players are eligible to pitch after the fifth inning. One pitch in an inning constitutes a whole inning.
- b) Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning must be removed from pitching and may not return to pitch in the same inning or the next inning. For purposes of this rule, a pitch that contacts the ground prior to hitting the batter does not count towards the total of two hit batters; however, the batter may be awarded first base in accordance with USA SOFTBALL Rule 8, Section 1F.

# **Baja Arizona Softball Association**

## **2023 Official League Rules**

### **Fall Ball**

#### **I. Introduction**

Fall Ball provides an opportunity for players to continue playing softball during the off season. Because it is an off-season activity, there are fewer players involved and the league boards may have less direct involvement. Fall Ball teams generally play double-headers on the weekends and must follow the same substitution and playing rules as the Spring Season.

#### **II. Team Formation**

Team balancing is not considered when forming teams for Fall Ball, and complete teams are able to register as whole, provided Baja league boundaries are respected. Different philosophies and priorities go into the creation of each team, based on the desires of those putting them together, and there will be a wide range of skill level between opponents. For this reason, it is entirely possible for a young, inexperienced team to go an entire Fall season without a win.

Communicating this ahead of time will hopefully save angst and discontent and the focus can be placed on development of the team and not concern over their win-loss record.

Established USA SOFTBALL teams may not participate in Baja Fall Ball, unless needed to provide a complete season for a particular age division. A Spring-based Baja team, which may have participated in post-season USA SOFTBALL or other competitive tournaments, is considered eligible for Fall Ball. Once registered for Fall Ball, a team may choose to participate in up to three non-Baja tournaments, provided dates are submitted prior to the Baja scheduling meeting. A team that misses a scheduled Baja game and is discovered to be participating in an outside tournament will be immediately removed from the remainder of the Baja schedule.

It is the intent of Baja to provide a safe, fun place for recreational players to enjoy the game of softball. It is with this in mind, that leagues are charged with maintaining a level of competitiveness that is in keeping with the Baja Mission Statement. While the team formation rules are fairly loose, the leagues will put forth their best effort in preventing a highly competitive team (one that is above and beyond typical All-Star level) from forming and placing our recreational players in a position to suffer such defeats as to discourage further enjoyment of the game.

#### **III. Game Responsibilities**

The home team is responsible for providing one new and one gently used ball to the plate umpire at the beginning of each game. In double -headers, the hosting team is designated the "home" team for the first game and the visiting team is "home" for the second game. Teams will not switch dugouts between games.

The hosting league/team will schedule umpires (1 for 8U, 2 for 10U and above) and each team will split the cost of the umpires. If junior umpires are used, the hosting team will notify the opposing team prior to payment being made.

#### **IV. Addendum**

All Policies and Procedures listed in this document that pertain to the Spring season shall have the same effect on the Fall season. The only exception will be that coaches are allowed to build their own roster prior to the start of the Fall season.

The Fall rosters will be subject to the same rules of the City Tournament of Champions. No player movement will be allowed during the Fall tournament and rosters will be subject to verification as they are in the City Tournament of Champions to ensure that all players are from the original roster.

## SUMMARY OF CHANGE

### 2023

Various Changes to spelling and content, Added result of 8U player sliding

### 2019

Changed all references to NSA were replaced with USA SOFTBALL to reflect new affiliation with USA Softball  
Page 30-changed number of umpires for regular season and pool play 10U division games to 1, will keep 2 umpires for all championship bracket play

### 2016

Page 3 - added sentence requiring all board members to be active members of their respective league  
Page 3 – added sentence requiring all leagues to have all board member positions filled prior to the start of Fall practices each year and if a member is lost a replacement must be found within 15 days  
Page 24 – addendum added to make all Spring season rules to apply to the Fall season in the same manner with the exception of allowing coaches to create their own rosters and Fall roster will be checked the same as City Tournament rosters to ensure no player movement has occurred from original roster.

### 2014

Page 21 and 24 – added sentence that Metal cleats are NOT allowed  
Appendix III – made changes to some of the league boundaries. Changed approved by leagues affected.

### 2013

Section VI – Added text to address league boundaries  
8U – Overthrow/Foul Territory rule modified for clarification  
Appendix III – Baja School Listing added  
Page 26 – Fall Ball Rules added

### 2012

#### 6U

Moved around certain sections to be more consistent with the order of other age divisions

#### 8U

Overthrow/Foul Territory rule modified to include overthrow to the catcher. Pg. 19 (10f)  
Defensive substitution information copied from Minimum Play rules section as items 6H and 6I.

#### 8U, 10U, 12U/14U/18U

Requirement to submit a substitution plan at start of game added to each division.  
Required number of scheduled umpires added to each division.  
Matrix modified to remove row containing “consecutive innings catching”.

### 2011

Number of activities per week clarified in Section X, Paragraph A-1.  
Changed the description of the 8U game ball.  
Added 18U to the 12U/14U Division Rules.  
Sections III and IX of the Addendum for Code of Conduct modified to add clarification for Baja involvement.  
Matrix updated to reflect 8U overthrow rule approved in 2010

### 2010

#### 8U

Substitution rules clarified for pitcher.  
Bunting rule implemented  
Base running rule 10d clarified  
Base running rule 10f modified to include overthrow to 3<sup>rd</sup> base

#### 10U

Implemented 2008 USA SOFTBALL 10U-B rules regarding base running. 10U-B rules were removed from 2009 USA SOFTBALL rulebook which made for more aggressive play in 10U than what is needed in Baja. Not a change to Baja play – just no longer referencing something that doesn't exist. (Approved in May 2009)

#### All

Added requirement to notify umpire and opposing manager of the players on the bench each inning.

### 2009

#### 10U

Advancing from 3<sup>rd</sup> clarified

#### 14U

Innings pitched limit changed from 3 to 4 of first 5

### 2008 Mid Season:

Item 3a modified in 8U, 10U, 12U/14U divisions to implement drop dead time.

**2008:****8U**

Run limit lifted in 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent innings.

No "New innings" time limit re-instated; drop dead time removed.

**10U** No "New innings" time limit re-instated; drop dead time removed.

Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> can attempt to advance home except in the event of a wild pitch or passed ball.

**12U**

No "New innings" time limit re-instated; drop dead time removed.

**14U**

No "New innings" time limit re-instated; drop dead time removed.

**2007:****6U**

No "New innings" time limit removed

**8U**

Innings pitched limits changed from weekly to "per game."

No "New innings" time limit removed

**10U**

Pitching distance found on matrix changed to 35 feet.

Innings pitched limits changed from weekly to "per game."

Typo corrected on stealing, now one base per pitch.

No "New innings" time limit removed.

**12U**

Innings pitched limits changed from weekly to "per game."

Pitching distance found on matrix changed to 40 feet.

No "New innings" time limit removed.

**14U**

Innings pitched limits changed from weekly to "per game."

Sliding must be feet first. Refer to the matrix.

No "New innings" time limit removed.

# 2019 BAJA GIRLS SOFTBALL RULES MATRIX

	6U	8U	10U	12U	14U, 16U, 18U
<b>FIELD &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>					
Ball Size	10" RIF	11" RIF	11"	12"	12"
Field Dimensions	45'	55' (60')	60'	60'	60'
Pitching Distance	28' MAX	32'	35'	40'	40'
<b>GAME MANAGEMENT</b>					
Coach pitch after 4 called balls		X			
Infield/Outfield	NA	1in/1out	NA	NA	NA
Max innings pitched per game	NA	2	2 of 4	3 of 5	4 of 5
# players batting	entire roster	entire roster	entire roster	entire roster	entire roster
Min # players to play	5	8	8	8	8
Max# players on defense		10	9	9	9
<b>GAME PLAY</b>					
Strike zone-top	NA	top of shoulder	arm pits	arm pits	arm pits
Strike zone-bottom	NA	bottom of knees	top of knees	top of knees	top of knees
Stealing	NO	NO	1 base/pitch	YES	YES
Stealing Home	NO	NO	YES <sup>1</sup>	YES	YES
Run on dropped 3rd strike	NA	NO	NO	YES	YES
Run limit/inning	NA	3 for 3	4 for 3	4 for 3	4 for 3
Runner leaving base	after hit	after hit	after release	after release	after release
Pitcher hit batters (limit)	na	2/inning	2/inning	2/inning	2/inning
Ball slips from pitcher's hand	na	ball/dead	ball/dead	ball/live	ball/live
Batter hit by coach		ball			
Infield Fly Rule	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Running on overthrow @1st	NO	See Text <sup>2</sup>	YES	YES	YES
Play Stops	See Text	See Text <sup>3</sup>	8' circle	8'circle	8'circle
Illegal Pitch	NA	Correct 1st	Call it	Call it	Call it
Sliding	NO	NO	feet first only	feet first only	feet first only
Tagging up after caught fly	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
<b>REGULATION GAME</b>					
Time Limit (no new inning)	1 hour	1 hour, 20 min	1 hour, 30 min	1 hour, 30 min	1 hour, 30 min
Time Limit (drop dead)	NA	1 hour, 40 min	1 hour, 50 min	1 hour, 50 min	1 hour, 50 min
Mercy Rule	NA	NA	8 after 4	10 after 4	10 after 4
# innings for regulation game	4	4	5	6	7
min # innings for complete game	NA	3	3	4	4
# umpires per scheduled game	NA	1	1	2	2

<sup>1</sup>(10U Division) A runner on 3rd may not steal home on a passed ball or a wild pitch. See 10U rules for detailed explanation

<sup>2</sup>(8U Division) An overthrow into either foul territory stop the play. See paragraph 10f in the 8U section.

<sup>3</sup>(8U Division) there are two cases for ending play whether the ball in hit to the infield or outfield. See paragraph 10d in the 8U section.

# BAJA Girls Fastpitch Softball Association

## CODE OF CONDUCT PACKET

STAFF, PARENTS, AND PLAYERS ARE REQUIRED TO READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THIS DOCUMENT TO THE ORO VALLEY FASTPITCH BOARD PRIOR TO THE START OF THE FIRST REGULAR SEASON GAME

(Please note – “Parent” refers also to a guardian)

AGE DIVISION: \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MANAGER: \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD COACH: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_

BOARD MEMBER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_



**BAJA Girls Fastpitch Softball Association  
2023 Season Season  
PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT PLEDGE**

I know as a parent/guardian that I am a role model to my child. I pledge to provide an environment for players, manager, coaches, and other staff and volunteers that is conducive to good sportsmanship, respect, positive support, and the development of friendships in the spirit of competition. I understand that any infraction of the BAJA rules or the Code of Conduct will place me (and any of my guests) in direct violation and subject me to disciplinary action that could include the consequences listed on page 3.

**I (and my guests) pledge to:**

- Remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for our youth, not for the adults.
- Inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
- Be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy for everyone involved in the league (players, coaches, officials, spectators) at all times during practices and games.
- Not engage in any kind of inappropriate conduct, nor allow my child to engage in such conduct as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, use profane language or inappropriate gestures and very importantly, to not engage in any physical altercations with anyone while attending any BAJA function.
- Learn and respect the rules of the game and policies of the league. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence. I will ensure that my child treats other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- Teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning so that my child never feels defeated by the outcome of a game or their performance. I will praise my child for trying their best and for competing fairly. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a game.
- Respect the officials and their authority during games. I will never question, discuss, or confront coaches/umpires on the game field. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches/umpires at an agreed upon time and place.
- Provide a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will abstain from their use at all BAJA events.
- Refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the officials or coaches of the team





**BAJA ARIZONA GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION  
2023 Season Season  
COACH/MANAGER CODE OF CONDUCT PLEDGE**

**Baja Arizona Girls Softball Association Code of Conduct for Coaching Staff**

I know, as a member of the coaching staff, that I'm held to a higher standard at all times on and off the field. I pledge to provide an environment for players, managers, coaches, and other staff and volunteers that is conducive to good sportsmanship, respect, positive support, and the development of friendships in the spirit of competition. I understand that any infraction of the rules or the Code of Conduct will place me in direct violation of this Code of Conduct and subject me to the consequences listed on page 3.

I understand that it is my responsibility to attempt to address any incidents at the time of its occurrence or ask for assistance from the umpire or league official. I also understand that any and all incidents must be reported to league board officials immediately and at any point in time, the umpire and league officials have every right to ask any parent, coach, manager or spectator to leave the park if they act in an unsportsmanlike manner.

**In order to be a successful coach or manager I pledge to:**

- Treat each player as an individual, remembering the emotional and physical development of each participant. I understand that players have different abilities and the true measure is not how they compare to others but how they are doing in comparison to their best selves.
- Do my best to provide a safe playing situation for all players. I will not only abstain from drugs, tobacco and alcohol at all games and other BAJA activities, I will ensure that the parents and their guests know that having drugs, tobacco and alcohol at any BAJA event is in direct violation of the Code of Conduct.
- Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- Do my best to organize practices that are both fun and challenging for all players with the focus of teaching softball fundamentals and improving skills.
- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for and interactions with all players, coaches and umpires at every game or practice. I will "Honor the Game" and encourage respect from not only the players but from the parents and their guests. I understand that physical assault, vulgar, demeaning and/or obscene language or gestures to any staff, BAJA officials, umpires, players or parents is in direct violation of the Code of Conduct.
- Be knowledgeable of the rules of BAJA softball and should I have any questions about any particular rule, I will address those questions with a BAJA league representative and/or the umpire prior to the start of a game. If I question the interpretation of a rule made by the umpire during a game, I will address those concerns in a professional and respectful manner.
- Remember that I am a youth sports coach/manager and that the game is for the children, not the adults.



**BAJA ARIZONA GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**2023 Season Season**  
**CONDUCT VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES**

**Consequences—any coaching staff or parent(guardian) in direct violation of this code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, the following\*\*:**

<b>Violation</b>	<b>1st Offense</b>	<b>2nd Offense</b>
Verbal abuse, intimidation, rude, vulgar and demeaning language, obscene language or gestures, alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use.	~Asked to leave the event ~Verbal warning ~Written warning ~One game suspension ~Child(ren) may be asked to be removed from the event	~Suspended from BAJA events for the season ~Placement on probation ~Child(ren) may be barred from further participation of the season
Physical assault* of an official, coach, player, fellow parent or volunteer	~ Immediate suspension pending hearing review by Code of Conduct Committee	~Banned from BAJA permanently, including their child(ren)

\*\*Depending on the severity of the infraction and the situation, the board has the authority to impose a greater penalty up to and including suspension or automatic removal from BAJA.

\*The term “physical assault” includes, but is not limited to: hitting, slapping, pushing, spitting, kicking or physical contact in any way with any part of the body or the usage of any physical implement as a weapon.



**BAJA ARIZONA GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION  
2023 Season SEASON  
TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT PLEDGE  
SIGNATURE PAGE**

**WE AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT PLEDGE AS DESCRIBED ON THE PROCEEDING PAGE:**

<b>LEAGUE, TEAM NAME, AND AGE DIVISION</b>		
	<b>PLEASE PRINT</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
<b>MANAGER NAME</b>		
<b>ASSIST MANAGER</b>		
<b>COACH NAME</b>		
<b>COACH NAME</b>		
<b>COACH NAME</b>		
<b>PLAYER'S NAME AND NUMBER (PLEASE PRINT)</b>	<b>PLAYER SIGNATURE BELOW</b>	<b>PARENT SIGNATURE BELOW</b>
1.		
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