

Spring 2023 8U Softball League

Rules & Amendments

Since USA Softball does not have formal rules for 8U recreational softball, the USA Softball 10U rules shall be used.

However, the following local rules will have precedence over the USA Softball 10U rules. Also keep in mind that there are a set of separate league rules that apply to all age divisions.

I. General

1. These division rules come first then USA Softball rules will prevail.
2. All activities shall be conducted at the highest possible levels of sportsmanship.
3. At no time will a player, coach, or fan be permitted to stand behind the backstop.
 - a. This is important for the coaches and the umpires to enforce.
 - b. This applies to those people hanging on the backstop or coaching from the behind the back stop.
4. Games shall start at the scheduled time.
 - a. 8U games will be 4 innings, the 4th inning will be an unlimited run inning.
 - b. There will be a hard drop dead time after 1 hour 30 minutes, regardless of inning status. This is to keep the games from taking too long and keep games on schedule.
5. An 11 inch training softball (provided by the MCGSA) will be the official game ball.
 - a. The umpires will get the game balls from the official's office and return them after the game. (Unless otherwise specified)
 - b. There are generally 3 balls provided for an 8U game.
6. The baselines shall have marks indicating the half-ways points between the bases (1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, 3rd and home).
7. All batters must wear an approved NOCSAE approved helmet with approved face guard.
8. All players must wear a NOCSAE approved face guard.
9. All pitchers must wear a heart guard. MCGSA will provide heart guards.

II. Players

1. No more than 10 players on the field at a time. No exceptions!

- a. The infield consists of 4 infielders, a catcher and a pitcher.
 - b. The outfield consists of no more than 4 players and shall remain on the grass until the ball crosses the plate.
 - c. There must be a player in the pitcher and catcher positions
 - d. If the maximum 10 players are not present, the coach should request call up players to reach the roster size of 10. It is important to give players moving into age groups an opportunity to play up and gain experience. The focus is on providing play time for the players.
 - e. If the call up player list has been exhausted and a team has less than 8 players, the opposing team coaches may lend players to shorthanded teams, if that team has over 10 players. Shorthanded team will incur a loss, but a game may be played.
2. All players who are not participating in the game on the field must remain in the dugout.
 - a. Sometimes a difficult feat, but please try to instill in the girls that they need to remain in the dugout area
 3. Any players that are playing up (that is, players filling in from the 6U division), may only play in the outfield position. They must also bat last in the batting order.

III. Coaches

1. The head coach is responsible for the actions of his or her team and assistant coaches.
2. Head coaches and assistant coaches may be base coaches.
3. Any number of defensive coaches may be positioned behind the outfielders though we have found 2 coaches in the outfield works best.
4. Only coaches, scorekeepers, and team players are allowed in the dugout.
 - a. The adults in the dugout **MUST** have completed a background check and the Safe Sport Training.. **The head coach also must have the ACE certification completed.**
 - b. Go to www.registerusasoftball.com to get your certification
 - c. This will be enforced by verifying that registered coaches have completed the certification on the web site
 - d. There may also be on field checks to make sure only the registered coaches are in the dugouts.
 - e. Try to keep the number of adults in the dugouts to no more than three (head coach, assistant coach and scorekeeper. Note the scorekeeper can be outside if your need a child wrangler in the dugout)

5. Only the head coach can approach an umpire to question or appeal a play.
 - a. You cannot question a judgment call, but you can question misapplication of the rules.
 - b. You need to discuss it with the umpire making the call. **Call for a time and ask to speak with the umpire.**
6. If a coach is hit by a ball in fair territory the ball is considered in play. It is umpire's discretion if it is believed that a coach intentionally interfered with the ball. This would result in the runner nearest the plate being called out and a warning to the coach. A repeat would result in the runner closest to the plate being called out and ejection of the coach from the game.

IV. Game Rules

1. A complete game will consist of 4 innings. The umpire will instruct the home team to record the actual starting time in the home score book.
 - a. Time limit rules are in section I: General of these rules
2. Time outs may be called at any time on offense or defense.
3. There is free substitution on defense.
4. An inning will consist of ten batters, three outs, or 5 runs, whichever occurs first. If the team is playing with eight or nine players they still bat ten batters (i.e. it is possible for a batter to bat twice in the same inning). During the last inning the 5 run and 10 batter rules will not apply. The last inning may only end with 3 outs or at the agreement of the head coaches.
 - a. The last inning will be the 4th inning. Unless it is not reached due to reaching the drop dead time limit.
5. The Run Ahead Rule (Rule 5, Section 9 of the USA Softball rules) is modified as follows: After 2 innings, if a team is ahead by 10 or more runs, their players receive 1 coach pitch regardless of the player pitch count. The batter cannot foul out on the last pitch. After 3 innings, if a team is still ahead by 10 or more runs, their players receive 1 coach pitch regardless of the player pitch count.

V. Batter/Runner and Runners

1. Batter/runners and runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out until the umpire calls time, except on an errant throw (see section V.6). The umpire will call time when:
 - a. The pitcher has control of the ball in the pitching circle; or
 - b. When the ball has crossed the plane of the circle.

2. Runners who have passed halfway to the next base when time is called will be allowed to proceed without liability to be put out.
3. Base Running:
 - a. First Five games:
 1. Runners may leave the base when the batter has made contact with the pitch.
 - b. Second Five games and playoffs:
 1. Coaches should begin working with the girls on how to lead off the base. The player cannot leave the base until the pitch leaves the pitchers hand and will only be allowed to go approximately 3-5 steps off the base.
 2. The player can lead off but may not advance unless the batter has made contact with the ball.
 - c. Players leaving early will result in one (1) WARNING per team. After each team has been warned, the next runner to leave early will be called out.
4. Stealing is not allowed
5. Runners MAY NOT advance on a passed ball.
6. Runners are entitled to a maximum of 1 base on an errant throw with liability to be put out. Runners cannot advance more than one base even if additional defensive plays are attempted. This applies to all runners, not just the runner that was at the base where the errant throw was made.
 - a. Example: There is a runner on 1st when the ball is hit, that runner advances to second on the hit and a play is made on the batter at 1st resulting in an errant throw. The runner at second can advance to third and the runner at first can advance to second but they cannot advance past that.
7. No bunting
8. No dropped 3rd strike
9. No infield fly rule
10. No look back rule
11. Round robin batting will be used. All rostered players present at the game shall bat in the order. (All players will stay in batting order even if they are not on the field).
12. When batting round robin, if a runner becomes injured while running the bases she may be temporarily replaced by the offensive player who made the last out in the current inning, or if this is the first batter, then the last out from the previous inning. However, if

the injured runner cannot bat at her next at-bat, she will be removed from the game and cannot re-enter that game.

13. If a player is hit by a pitched ball, there are distinct rulings.
 - a. If the ball hits the batter in the air, the batter has to take her base.
 - b. If the ball hits the ground first, the batter may either take her base OR choose to finish the at bat.
 - c. Coaches are encouraged to teach the players how to attempt to move out of the way of a wild pitch.

VI. Pitching

1. There will be no walks
2. Umpires will call strikes and balls for player pitches.
3. **The Pitcher can accumulate a Max of 3 called balls. After the 3rd called player pitched ball, an offensive coach pitches. The offensive coach will pitch no more than 3 pitches unless the batter accumulates 3 strikes for a strike out. Strikes earned by the player pitch carry over. Example: Player Pitches until there is a 3 ball count, then coach get 3 pitches. If player pitches a 3 ball, 2 strike count, then the coach only gets 1 pitch. 3 ball, 1 strike count, the coach gets 2 pitches.**
 - a. **In the event that a coaches last pitch is deemed an unhittable pitch by the umpire, The coach will be permitted to have one more pitch. This is to prevent players from swinging at bad pitches because it is the last pitch.**
 - b. **Only one additional pitch will be permitted by the umpire.**
4. After the maximum of 3 pitches by the offensive coach or if the batter reaches 3 swinging strikes, the batter is OUT unless the ball is fouled off. The pitches will continue until the batter does not foul off the pitch or another pitch is thrown and the batter does not swing.
5. Coaches MUST pitch from the designated pitching plate. **Please be ready.**
6. The offensive coach only enters the field when it is time to pitch.
7. While the offensive coach is pitching the player at the pitcher position must have one foot in the pitcher's circle
8. The pitching distance will be 32 feet
9. The goal is to have the pitchers follow USA Softball rules with respect to pitching.
10. All pitchers are required to wear fielding masks and heart guards while pitching
11. Players may pitch no more than 2 innings

12. If the pitcher returns in the same inning it will be considered another inning.
13. Catcher assist. A coach/parent with a completed background check will be permitted to closely assist their catcher in retrieving wild pitches. This designated assistant must remain behind the fence until the ball crosses the plate.