

# **CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION**

## **SOFTBALL RULES/REGULATIONS**

### **I. PLAYING RULES:**

- A. Official Rules: The rules of the CYO Softball League are those of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA). It is imperative that each coach has a working knowledge of the NFHS and MHSAA rules in addition to those rules governing CYO Athletics.
- B. Purpose of these Rules: CYO wishes to stress that scores are not to be run-up by winning teams, and also wishes to emphasize that coaches must make every effort to play as many team members as possible in a given game.
- C. Team Minimum: A team must be able to field nine (9) players at game time or the game is forfeited. If a player is ejected, becomes ill or injured and is unable to finish the game, the team may finish the game with no more less than eight (8) players.
- D. Game time: Game time is forfeit time. If one team is not present and ready to play at the time that a contest is scheduled to begin, their opponent may accept a forfeit victory for that contest. Game umpires shall sign the score sheet to verify forfeit. No umpire is required to wait beyond the scheduled game time for a team.
- E. Game Length: Seven (7) innings shall constitute a game.
- F. Extra Innings:
1. 5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Tied games will be considered complete games and will be recorded as a tie, no extra innings will be played.
  2. 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Tied games will be determined by playing an equal number of extra innings until a winner has been determined.
- G. Game Time Limit: No inning shall begin after one hour and thirty minutes of play, unless the score is tied. An inning that begins prior to one hour and thirty minutes will be completed regardless of time.
- H. Mercy Rule: A game will be officially concluded when a team is fifteen (15) or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat in the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. (**Exception**: Time limit supersedes all other rules).
- I. Travesty Rule (5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Only): The batting team may not score more than seven (7) runs in any half inning, unless that team is behind in the score. Teams behind in the score may score as many runs as needed to tie, plus seven (7) runs. A hit may not be taken away from a player; for example, if six (6) runs have already scored for the batting team in their half inning, any additional runs after seven (7) that are batted in by the batter will be counted; until a dead ball is declared or the third out called. Regular mercy rule still applies.

## II. GAME RULES/REGULATIONS:

- A. Playing Field: A diamond or infield shall be a 60-foot square. The outfield is the unobstructed area between the two foul lines that extends beyond the infield a minimum of 120 feet. All fields are to be marked accordingly and groomed to ensure safety.
1. Base Distance: Distance between bases is sixty (60) feet.
  2. Pitching Distance: 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade - 40 feet, 5/6<sup>th</sup> grade - 36 feet.
  3. Pitching Regulations: This is a fast pitch league. Any legal pitch or pitching motion may be used.
- B. Protective Equipment: Catchers must wear a throat guard on their mask, a helmet, shin guards, and a chest protector. All players - batters, base runners, base coaches, or on deck players, must wear a helmet.
- C. Helmets: All helmets in use must have the **NOCSAE** stamp of approval.
- D. Metal Spikes: Metal spikes are prohibited, violation will result in forfeit.
- E. Regulation Softball: The official ball of the CYO league shall be the 12-inch regulation high school softball as per the National Federation Rule Book. Each team will furnish a new ball or a ball deemed by the umpire to be playable for each game. CYO uses the optic yellow softball.
- F. Uniform Numbers: Each player shall be numbered on the back of the shirt and no players on the same team shall wear identical numbers.
- G. Roster Exchange: Preceding ALL CYO Softball Non-League/Crossover and/or League Contests, each team is REQUIRED to exchange rosters with the opposing team ten (10) minutes prior to the start of the game. This list should be prepared in numerical sequence indicating jersey number and name of each player.
- H. Team Benches: The home team has the choice of bench (1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline). It is recommended that the home team takes the third base bench and the visiting team takes the first base bench.
- I. Pre-Game Warm-up: The visiting team takes infield practice thirty (30) minutes prior to game time. The home team takes infield practice fifteen (15) minutes prior to game time.
- J. SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS TO NATIONAL FEDERATION RULES:
1. Two (2) Strike - Three (3) Ball Rule: CYO plays 3 balls (walk) and 2 strikes (out) with the following modifications:
    - a. Dropped Second Strike: On a legally pitched ball that is dropped or blocked by the catcher which does not break the plane (passed ball) behind the catcher is considered a dead ball. On such a dead ball, the batter is automatically out, and runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch without jeopardy.
    - b. Bunt Attempt: The batter will be automatically out if the second foul ball after the first strike is the result of a bunt attempt. There is no limit on the number of foul balls that a batter may hit by swinging.
  2. Free Substitution Rule (7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Only): Free substitution means that at anytime a player may be moved in and out of the lineup as long as they remain batting in the same position whenever in the lineup.
    - a. A player who replaces a pitcher whose team is not at bat shall be required to pitch

to the first batter until she advances safely to first base or until she has been put out, or until there is a third out.

- b. A player who replaces a batter must bat until she safely advances to first base, is put out, or until there is a third out.

## **FREE SUBSTITUTION RULE:** (Clarification)

Free substitution means that at anytime a player may be moved in and out of the line-up as long as they remain batting in the same position whenever in the line-up.

Things to remember:

- ◆ The intent of the rule is to allow more players the opportunity to participate.
- ◆ There is only one (1) line-up. If a player takes a position in the field, they also take a position in the batting line-up.
- ◆ If player B substitutes in the game for player A, players A and B cannot play in the field at the same time since player A is no longer in the game. Players occupying the same position in the batting line-up may not play the field at the same time.
- ◆ Always remember when substituting to enter players names on the score sheet whether they enter as a defensive or offensive player.

Penalty:

Batting - Illegal batter, player is called out.

Fielding - Illegal player, player removed from the game.

3. Intentional Walk: If a team desires to intentionally walk the batter, they may do so by informing the umpire in charge. It will not be necessary to throw three pitches. Such information may be given by the coach, catcher, or other delegated authority.
4. Base Stealing: Not allowed in 5/6<sup>th</sup> grade or 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade CYO softball.
5. Advancing on Passed Balls:
  1. 5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Runners may not advance at the 5/6<sup>th</sup> grade level.
  2. 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Runners may advance one (1) base on a passed ball at their own risk.

Regarding passed ball on last (second) strike:

    - a. With less than two out and first base occupied, batter is out.
    - b. With two out and first base occupied, batter-runner may attempt to advance to first base and all other base runners may advance. Batter-Runner must be put out by either touching her with the ball or throwing her out at first base. (If the batter makes no attempt and leaves the live ball area she will be automatically called out).
    - c. The ball must be a passed ball and not just a dropped second strike. Whether or not a pitch is a passed ball and breaks the plane behind the catcher is a judgement call by the umpire.
6. Batting Order (5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Only): Every player must bat using one batting order for the entire game. The batting order must remain the same with no changes. When taking the field (on defense), free substitution is allowed. If a batter becomes ill or has to leave, the next batter in the batting order will bat.
7. Leading-off Base:
  1. 5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Leading off the base is not permitted. Runners must hold their base until the batter swings or they will be called out. The batter is automatically out on

- a swinging or called second strike. The catcher is not required to catch the pitch. When a passed ball or dropped second strike occurs at this level of play, the ball is dead.
2. 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Allowed at the 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade level according to the National Federation regulations with the following modifications:
    - a. Runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch after each legally pitched ball. Pick-off attempts are legal.
    - b. When there is an error resulting from the pick-off attempt on a runner returning to the base she occupied at the time of the pitch, runner(s) may advance one (1) base at their own risk.

### **III. LEAGUE RULES/REGULATIONS:**

- A. Umpires: CYO will assign one (1) registered umpire to all games unless a Parish/School chooses to secure their own registered umpires for their home games. **NOTE**: Parishes/Schools securing their own MHSAA umpires should notify the CYO office when entering teams. All umpires assigned through the CYO office or hired through the Parish/School by the home team must be registered with the Michigan High School Athletic Association. In all cases, the home team is responsible for paying all umpires prior to the start of the game.
- B. Umpires Not Present: In the event that the assigned umpires are not present to officiate the game(s) the teams will have two (2) options:
  1. Play the game with individuals they mutually agree to have officiate the game(s). If a mutual agreement is made to play, the contest(s) result will stand.
  2. Re-schedule the game(s) with the CYO office after mutually agreeing on date(s) and time(s).
- C. Rain-Outs/Postponed Games: In the event of postponed weekday games due to weather conditions, the home team shall be liable for the umpire's fee if the CYO has assigned an umpire and they fail to notify the CYO Office at least (4) hours prior to game time. If weekend games are postponed by weather conditions, the umpire will call the home team to see if the game is canceled.
- D. Suspended Games: If a game is called by the umpire due to weather, darkness, or for any reason, the game will continue from the point of suspension at another time agreed upon by both teams. If the game is suspended after completing 5 full innings, the game is considered a complete game, the results will stand, and the remaining innings will not be played with the exception of the semi-final and final games in the play-offs in which the game will be completed at the point of suspension. The home team is responsible for paying the umpire prior to the start of the game (completion of suspended game).
  1. 5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade: If the score is tied, each team will be given credit with a victory.
  2. 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: In the event a 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade team needs the victory to determine a division champion the game must be completed at a later date and time convenient for both teams.
- E. Re-Scheduled Games: All games that been postponed, suspended, or rained-out must be re-scheduled within two (2) weeks of the original play date. Teams in contention for their division championship must have completed their schedule one (1) week prior to the start of play-offs or made the necessary arrangements with the CYO Athletic Department Director.
- F. League Standings: The league standings will be computed on the basis of two (2) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. Non-league games do not count in

division standings.

- G. Roster Limitations: There is no limit as to the number of players that a team may have. Additional players may be similarly registered (as per CYO eligibility rules) at any time during the regular season.
- H. Insurance: Secondary medical insurance is provided for participants for all athletics through the Michigan Catholic Conference. This coverage has some limitations and is secondary to parent's medical coverage. This coverage is in effect if the student has no medical coverage. Information can be obtained through the School Principals or Parish Pastors.

#### **IV. PLAY-OFFS:**

- A. 5/6<sup>th</sup> Grade: There are no play-offs for 5/6<sup>th</sup> grade teams.
- B. 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: The CYO will sponsor a play-off tournament at the conclusion of the season for the 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade teams that win their division. Teams qualifying for play-offs may not enter into any other tournament(s).
  - 1. Teams invited by the CYO Athletic Department Director are based on league records and/or from divisions that are traditionally the strongest in the CYO Softball Program.
- C. Division Tie Breaker (7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Only):
  - 1. If 2 or 3 teams tie for a division title, head-to-head game results will determine division champion.
  - 2. If still tied, a play-off game will be held to determine the division champion, time permitting. Such games will be played when and where directed by the CYO Office.
    - a. If Team A beat B, and A beat C, then A will be declared champion.
    - b. If Team A beat B, and B beat C, and C beat A then a three-way play-off will be held, time permitting.
  - 3. The CYO Athletic Department determines if a play-off can be held. A coin flip may be used to determine division champion.

#### **V. VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES:**

Violations of CYO rules and regulations shall subject a member Parish/School to any or all, but not limited to, the following: censure, probation with competition, probation without competition, forfeiture, suspension, and expulsion.