



**West Windsor Little League  
2017 Softball Rules of Play  
(Minors Division – Local Rules)**

Updated March 2017

All teams are provided with the Little League Softball Official Regulations and Playing Rules. All Managers and coaches should get to know the important rules that the league is required to abide by. As a guide, some of the rules and regulations are summarized and/or have been adopted by the West Windsor Little League to govern play this year. The Official Regulations and Playing Rules apply in all cases unless superseded below.

In games against teams from other towns, these rules do NOT apply; District 12 Rules apply instead.

### General Rules

1. **Playoff Standings:** Playoff standing will not be determined by regular season play. All teams will advance to the Post Season. Post-season brackets will be determined by random draw.
2. **Defensive Players:** There will be a maximum of 9 and a minimum of 8 defensive players on the field at any one time with no more than 6 infielders. The outfielders must be positioned beyond the infield dirt. A team having 9 or more eligible players must field 9 defensive players.
3. **Minimum Play:** No player may sit out (a) more than two innings per game or (b) two innings in a row. Each player must play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield. No player may play more than two innings at any one position during the game during regular season (more than 3 innings at any one position for playoff or Championship games), provided, however, a player may play up to three innings at catcher. Managers should ensure that positional playing time requirements are satisfied by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning since games often end early due to the 10-run rule, time limits, or weather. 10- run rule, time limits or weather
4. **Batting Order:** Managers must place all players present in the batting order, which will be continuous. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Managers should use best efforts to mix up the order each game to avoid having the same players consistently at the bottom of the order.
5. **Bunting:** Bunting is permitted.
6. **Slap bunting is not permitted** and will result in an out. Slap bunting is when the hitter “shows” bunt by taking a bunting stance and then pulls the bat back and hits away, usually “slapping” at the ball.
7. **Slap hitting IS allowed.** Slap hitting is where the batter, from the left side, takes a half swing at the ball trying to hit it while starting to run towards first base.
8. **Infield Fly Rule:** There is no infield fly rule.
9. **Run Maximum:** Before May 7, 2017, a modified five-run rule will be in effect. No batter may bat after the fifth run scores in an inning. In a situation where a team has scored four runs in the inning and there are runners on base, runners on third or second base may attempt to score on the next ball put in play, but

no more than six runs may score in the inning. The inning ends when the 6<sup>th</sup> run scores, or after five runs have scored there is a defensive out or when the play is dead. A runner may not score the 6<sup>th</sup> run in an inning unless she is at second base when the ball is put in play. (This prevents the offensive team from sending runners, including the batter, around the bases once the fifth run has scored – only runners who were in “scoring position” when the ball is put into play may attempt to score the 6<sup>th</sup> run in an inning). The lone exception to this rule is if the batter hits a home run over the fence, in which case the batter and all runners may score even if the total runs scored exceeds 6.

On May 7, 2017 (corresponding with the transition to all Player Pitch), the maximum runs able to be scored per inning will be 3.

10. **Intentional Walks:** Intentional walks are not permitted.
11. **Courtesy Runner:** A courtesy runner is allowed only for the player who will catch the next inning. The purpose is solely to avoid unnecessary delays when switching sides after the side is retired. The substitute runner must be the player that made the last batted out. In addition, the last batted out may be substituted as a runner for an injured runner.
12. **Leading and Stealing:** There is no leading. Base runners may not leave the base until the pitch crosses the plate. Stealing is permitted as follows. A maximum of 2 attempted steals of second base and 2 attempted steals of home per inning per team will be allowed. Unlimited steals of third are allowed. Advancement on a wild pitch, passed ball, or an error on any “live” throw from the catcher to the pitcher after a pitched ball is considered a steal. In order to encourage throws down to second or third, no base advancement is permitted on overthrows or errors during a stolen base attempt. However, if a player attempts to advance she is at risk of being tagged out; if she’s not tagged out, she will be sent back to the base she shouldn’t have left. *There is no stealing when coach pitching is in effect.* Base advancements that occur between the time a ball is put in play by a hitter and the time the ball is returned to the pitching circle under any defensive player's control are not considered steals. Examples: advancement on an overthrow during a play is not a steal.
13. **Base on Balls Continuation:** A runner advancing to first on a base on balls may NOT advance to second base until the next pitch, unless there is an attempted play in the field at the time of the base on balls (e.g. an attempted pickoff attempt at third by the catcher or errant throw back to the pitcher).
14. **Leaving the Bench:** A manager/coach shall not leave the bench except to confer with a player and only with the umpire’s prior permission. In order to give defensive direction, one coach of the defensive team may stand in the outfield during the beginning of the season. After April 22, 2017, no defensive coach is permitted on the field.
15. **Slide or Avoid:** Players must follow the “slide or avoid” rule. Players may not

attempt to knock over or hurdle the fielder. Failure to follow this rule may result in the player being called out, at the sole discretion of the umpire.

16. **On-Deck:** There is no on-deck position. A bat should not be touched until the batter is ready to come to the plate.
17. **Safety Base:** Many of our softball fields are equipped with a double safety base at first base. The white base is the fielder's base and the red or orange base is the runner's base. Fielders must use the white fielder's portion of the base. Runners must use the red runner's portion of the base when running through the bag. When rounding first, a runner should use the white portion of the base. Runners who "run through" the fielder's portion of the bag are subject to a warning on the first infraction and can be called out by the umpire for additional infractions.



### Pitching Rules

1. **Before May 7, 2017:** Each batter will be pitched to by a pitcher who is a player on the opposing team. Upon ball 4 the count is retained and the hitting team's coach will throw anywhere from 1 to 6 additional pitches to the batter who will either strike out or put the ball in play. The umpire will continue to call balls and strikes. A batter can strike out looking or swinging on a coach pitch, but she cannot walk. If the third strike occurs, the batter will be called out on strikes. If the batter puts the ball in play, the at bat ends with the result of the play. If the ball is not put in play after the 6th additional pitch, the batter will be called out. NOTE: When the batter gets to the point where it is the final pitch of her at bat, the coaches should encourage her to swing at the pitch no matter where the ball is located. No extra pitches awarded due to a bad last pitch. This rule is in place to keep the game moving and not cause the game to be delayed.

**Beginning on May 7, 2017:** Games will shift to all player pitch (coach will no longer come in after the 4<sup>th</sup> ball). Upon Ball 4, the batter will walk.

2. A foul ball on the 6th coach's pitch will not count and the coach will continue to pitch until the ball is hit fairly, not swung at or missed.
3. Coach pitchers must make an attempt to get out of the pitching circle after a ball is put in play. In addition, the coach pitcher must make every reasonable attempt to avoid interfering with a defensive play.
4. A ball accidentally fielded by the coach pitcher shall be considered a "do-over".

5. No coaching from the pitching circle.
6. If three batters are hit by a pitch thrown by the same pitcher during a game, that pitcher must leave the mound for the remainder of the inning once the third batter is hit. A new pitcher will come in to complete the inning. Once the inning is complete, the previous pitcher may come back to pitch at any time. Once any pitcher hits a maximum of five batters in a game, she may no longer pitch during that game. This includes pitches that bounce before crossing the plate. Batters must attempt to avoid being hit by pitched balls at all times in accordance with reasonable standards interpreted by the umpire. If, in the sole opinion of the umpire a batter purposely is hit by a pitch or fails to avoid being hit by a pitch, then that will not count against the pitcher's hit batsmen limit. Unless the umpire determines otherwise, if the batter is hit by a pitch, the batter is to take first base.
7. All player pitchers and coach pitchers will pitch from a rubber that is the regulation minors' distance of 35 feet.
8. During regular season and playoffs, for in-house games a pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in a game but only 2 consecutive innings before inning 5 of the game.
9. Delivery of one pitch is considered as pitching one inning.
10. For District 12 inter-league games, pitchers may pitch as many innings as allowed in the official Little League Softball Rule Book. Commencing with the 2014 season, this means a pitcher can pitch up to twelve (12) innings in a day.
11. If a pitcher pitches more than 7 innings in a single day, one day of rest is required before that pitcher may pitch again.
12. A pitcher may not pitch more than twelve (12) innings in any seven-day period.

### **Other Rules and Guidelines**

1. Obscenities and/or poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, managers, or parents will not be tolerated. Do not make disparaging comments about the other team, umpires, or anyone else. Managers, coaches or players using obscenities will be promptly removed from the game. Your coordinators will promptly resolve any and all issues brought to our attention.
2. Abuse of umpires will not be tolerated. We will at all times have either an adult umpire or another adult in charge of the game who will work with our youth umpires to ensure that the games are umpired in a professional manner. Any coach or manager ejected from a game for abusing the umpire will be automatically suspended from the following game, will have to leave the complex at which the game is being played and will not be allowed at the complex at which the next game is being played. Additionally, any manager or coach that is ejected must meet with the VP of Softball, the appropriate League Coordinator and the Player

Agent prior to resuming managerial duties for games or practices. The umpire will notify the Umpire Coordinator of the ejection promptly. If a manager wishes to confer with an umpire about a rule, he or she must request a time-out from the umpire and may not go on the field unless or until a time-out is granted. **No coach may join the manager in such discussion. No comments or discussions whatsoever regarding a judgment call of an umpire are permitted under any circumstances.** Any conversation with an umpire shall be conducted calmly and respectfully and in no event should any parent or player be able to hear such a conversation. Do NOT undermine the authority of our umpires at ANY time. Demonstrating good sportsmanship is more important than an umpire making a correct call. Any concerns a manager may have regarding an umpire should be directed to the League Coordinator following the game.

3. No inning may begin after one hour fifty minutes have elapsed and on Saturdays only (when there is a following game) no game may extend beyond two hours (hard time limit) . On weeknights, when there is no game immediately following, the inning in progress will be played to completion. An inning begins for the purposes of this rule at the end of the immediately preceding inning (either by the third out or the fifth run). The score reverts to the score at the end of the immediately preceding complete inning if play is stopped because the two-hour time limit is reached. A game is considered official if it is stopped because the two-hour time limit is reached.
4. If a game is tied after six innings, additional innings can be started until the one hour and fifty minute time limit is reached and played until the two hours time limit is reached. If no game follows, the game can continue past the one hour and fifty minute and two-hour time limits, but in no case may an inning start after 9:00 PM (Sunday through Thursday) or 10:00 PM (Friday and Saturday). If the tie is not broken before the time constraints are met, then the game can be continued prior to the next time the two teams play or at a mutually agreed upon time at the discretion of the League Coordinator. The league coordinator must be consulted about the scheduling of the suspended game.
5. Wearing jewelry of any kind, with the exception of a medic alert bracelet, is not permitted.
6. Food of any kind – including sunflower seeds -- is not permitted in the dugout. Only water is permitted. Each team MUST clean the dugout area prior to leaving the area.
7. The home team will take the first base dugout and is responsible to supply two game balls to the umpire.
8. The away team will take the third base dugout.
9. Game balls will be provided by the Softball Equipment Coordinator.
10. The home team must rake the infield, line the base lines and the 8-foot pitching circle before each game. The visiting team must rake the infield (prior to covering with the tarp, if appropriate) and clean out both dugouts after each game. However, in the spirit of sportsmanship, it is preferred that both teams

work together before and after the game to ensure that all field maintenance is completed as quickly as possible to allow the next game to begin or to allow everyone to go home as soon as possible.

11. Only the league coordinator can cancel a game due to weather conditions prior to the game's start. Once the game begins, it is the umpire's decision whether or not to cancel or delay the game.
12. In the event of poor weather on days prior to a game, it is the responsibility of both managers or their delegates to review the conditions of their scheduled field well ahead of the game time and to complete any maintenance to the field to ensure that their game can be played and can be started on a timely basis. This is NOT the job of the league coordinator or the VP of Softball. The need for field maintenance is not a reason to cancel or postpone a game.
13. It is the responsibility of the home team "Team Parent" to either select an adult volunteer to fulfill / directly supervise the announcer booth and scoreboard duties or to complete this responsibility themselves. If the "booth" duties are not supervised properly, the entire league can potentially lose the privilege of the use of the booth and the scoreboard.
14. It is the responsibility of both managers to report promptly the score and pitching statistics to the coordinator by email after the end of the game.