

NVGSA 8 & Under (8U) Pigtails 8U Division Rules

8U Division (Coach Pitch/T-Ball) program strives to introduce new players (ages 7 and 8 as of January 1) to the game of softball and to continue to develop skills for the returning players while preparing all players to move to the next level of play. The emphasis for this league is teaching the rules and skills, positioning of players in both defensive and base running situations, and strategies of softball while encouraging teamwork, good sportsmanship, and enjoyment of the game.

1. The 8 and under rules of the American Softball Association (ASA) apply, unless otherwise modified by this document.
2. Field Measurements
 - a. 50 feet between bases.
 - b. 35 feet between the back point of home plate and the pitching plate.
 - c. 8-foot circle (radius) chalk line around the pitching plate.
 - d. Right and left batting boxes are 3 feet wide and 7 feet deep – 4 feet from middle of plate forward and 3 feet from middle of plate backward
 - e. 10-foot arc (radius) chalk line in front of home plate (inside the arc is considered a foul ball) drawn from the first base line to the third base line, as measured from the back of home plate.
3. General and Game Duration
 - a. Teams may play a game with a minimum of four players placed defensively at first base, second base, third base and shortstop.
 - b. 11” Incrediball or a similar soft ball will be used for the games.
 - c. The home team is assigned the first base dugout.
 - d. The home team provides the game ball.
 - e. The home team is responsible for preparing the field for play.
 - f. There are no umpires assigned to these games. Coaches/Assistant Coaches will umpire the games. Base coaches will tell their own players if they are out.
 - g. There is no limit to the number of innings that can be played, but coaches should try to complete at least 4 innings.
 - h. An inning is over, regardless of the number of “outs,” when the last batter in the lineup takes her turn at bat.
 - i. All games will end (drop dead time) in 1 hour and 15 minutes.
4. Player Participation
 - a. All players present at the game will bat each inning.
 - b. All players present at the game are in field at the same time. No player “sits on the bench.”

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- c. The batting lineup should be changed each inning to allow each player to hit in a variety of spots in the order (i.e., leadoff, clean up, last batter).
- d. Players will be rotated to different defensive positions each inning. No player will be allowed to play the same defensive position more than once each game.
- e. Depending of roster size, players must be afforded an equal opportunity to play all defensive infield and outfield positions.
- f. Players who miss their turn at bat, due to injury or other valid cause, or because they must depart the field of play, shall be skipped without penalty to the team at bat. Notification to the opposing team manager should be made. Missed batting opportunities, for whatever reason, will not be made up.

5. Pitching

- a. The player pitcher must be somewhere inside the pitcher's circle when each pitch is made.
- b. A coach pitcher will pitch to his/her own team's batters.
- c. Coach pitchers will throw a maximum of 5 pitches. The emphasis is five pitches, not five swings. Please do not pitch more than 5 pitches because more pitches will slow down the game. The Pitching coach will release the ball in front of the circle around the pitching rubber. Foul balls and bad pitches are part of the five pitches. If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will then move to the Tee.
- d. The coach pitcher may pitch from inside or outside the circle or anywhere he/she needs to be to help ensure the batter hits the ball.

6. Batting

- a. Coaches will decide if the batter should start from a Tee or receive pitches from the coach. As much as possible, players should start with a pitched ball.
- b. Each batter will receive a maximum of five pitches. If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will then move to the Tee.
- c. Tee: Each batter will swing from the Tee until the ball is put into play.
- d. All batters must wear a helmet with a face guard and chin strap.
- e. There is no bunting allowed at this level. Any bunt will be considered as a foul ball.
- f. Any ball that stays inside the base lines is fair and playable except if it is not hit beyond the semi-circle arc drawn in front of home plate. Any ball that ends up within this semi-circle is a foul ball.
- g. Coaches must ensure that the batter takes her swings safely. Batter should be taught to hit and drop the bat rather than throw the bat after hitting the ball. The first throwing of a bat by a player results in a warning to both teams. The second throwing of a bat by any player results in that player being call out.
- h. Coaches should change the order of their lineups for each inning to allow the players to bat from a variety of spots in the lineup.
- i. The inning is over, regardless of the number of "outs," when the last batter in the lineup takes her turn at bat.

- i. When the last batter in the lineup comes up to bat in any inning, the coach of the team that is batting will clearly announce to the fielding team/coaches that this is the “*last batter*” prior to the player’s at bat.
- ii. Under the “*last batter rule*” once the last batter has gotten a hit, all runners (to include the batter) will circle all the bases in an attempt to “score” no matter where the ball is.
- iii. The fielding team must attempt to get one or more of the runners out on the bases first and then throw the ball to the catcher in an attempt to get an out or outs at home.

7. Base Running

- a. All base runners must wear a helmet with facemask and chin strap.
- b. There is no stealing allowed. The runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit by the batter.
- c. Sliding is allowed, but not required.
- d. Base runners will only advance to the next base when a batter hits the ball. If the batter hits a clean extra base hit, meaning no errors made by the fielders, then the base coach may send the base runner, to include the batter, a maximum of one additional base. For example, if the batter hits a clean base hit through the infield into the outfield, the runner on first base may attempt to advance to third base and the batter may attempt to advance to second base.
 - i. Exception: When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners must advance to home unless they are put out by the defense.
- e. Once an infielder or outfielder retrieves a hit ball and throws the ball toward any defensive player, or an infielder with the ball touches a base, base runners can advance only to the base that they are running to at the time the ball is thrown or the base was touched.
 - i. Exception: When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners must advance to home unless they are put out by the defense.
- f. If the ball is overthrown, players may not advance beyond the base to which they are running.
 - i. Exception: Rule does not apply when the last batter of the inning hits.
- g. Play stops when all base runners are on a base.
- h. Base runners running outside the base path shall be called out.

8. Defense/Fielding

- a. There is no limit on the number of defensive coaches allowed on the field during a game (two coaches are recommended), but coaches must allow room for the players to play.
 - i. The duties of the defensive coaches include ensuring that all defensive players are in the proper defensive positions before the coach pitches or the ball is placed on the Tee, including the outfielders staying in the outfield, infielders in the proper place, and catcher in the proper place. Coaches should help the players avoid the tendency to move closer to the plate throughout the inning.
- b. All players are in the field at the same time, no players “sit the bench”.

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- i. Six players are allowed to play in the infield (1st, 2nd, 3rd, SS, P, C); all other players must play in the outfield.
 - ii. Players will be rotated to different defensive positions each inning. No player will be allowed to play the same defensive position more than once each game.
 - c. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass or, if playing on an all dirt field, at least 10 feet behind the baseline.
 - d. Players should be encouraged to always try to throw and catch the ball with the other players (rolling the ball in should be discouraged).
 - e. Catchers must wear full catcher's gear including face guard with helmet, chest protector and shin guards.
 - i. If the catcher is not ready when her team takes the field, play should begin and the catcher may join the play when she is ready.
 - ii. A coach, parent or capable person should be positioned behind the catcher to quickly return any passed balls directly back to the pitcher. If the catcher catches the ball, the catcher should throw it back to the pitcher.
 - f. Infielders must start each play in their position and move to the ball after it is hit.
 - g. When the last batter hits the ball, the defense must attempt to put out a base runner before throwing the ball to the catcher.
 - i. Exception: This rule does not apply if there is a base runner on third base.
9. Fields
- a. Field Cancellations:
 - i. Home team is responsible for determining field playability and canceling a scheduled game.
 - ii. Coaches may both agree to cancel a game if weather conditions within two hours of game time warrant.
 - b. Do not use fields for games or practices when conditions are likely to cause injury or use will result in damage to the field.
 - c. All practices and games must stop if anyone sees lightening or hears thunder. Everyone must take cover in cars and play may not resume until 30 minutes have gone by without seeing lightening or hearing thunder.
 - d. Home team is responsible for preparing the field before the game. This includes raking any bad spots, lining the field with chalk (lime) and getting the batters Tee available.

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