

Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch

2014 Rule Modifications

Adopted February 7, 2014

Amended February 18, 2014

Inter-league Rules Issued Separately

Where possible, SMGF rules attempt to remain consistent with ASA regional, tournament, inter-league rules and guidelines for recreational softball play, keeping in mind that there are some aspects of our league tradition and precedent that emphasize the recreational nature of the spring league and its developmental focus, and will be maintained. Spring Season play will be governed by the ASA 2014 Official Rules of Softball applicable to Fastpitch Softball, except as specified in these Rule Modifications.

I. All Divisions

1. Girls are expected to participate in practices and in games and show sportsman-like behavior. Failure to do so may result in participation consequences at the discretion of the Manager and should be reported to the Division Director
2. Short-handed rule (except for 6U): a team may start with 7 players, and must bat the entirety of its players available at the game. There will be no "automatic out" for non-arriving or late-arriving players. Late arrivals must be inserted into the lineup in order of their arrival, at the bottom of the batting order. Six (6) players are required to complete a game, but if a team plays with less than seven (7), an out will be recorded for the vacated batting order slot where the seventh player was. Should two players leave at the same time dropping the team to six (6) players, the automatic out will be recorded for the player closest to the bottom of the batting order. If a team knows in advance that they will be shorthanded, a maximum of three players may be borrowed from other teams within the league from the same or lower age classification to a maximum of nine players. Teams that cannot field seven players to start will forfeit. The borrowed player(s) must bat last and play outfield positions. Players may not be recruited once the game has begun. There will be no "automatic out" for players who leave the game early, provided the need to depart is brought to the attention of the plate umpire and team representatives at the plate meeting (prior to the start of the game). If a player is injured during the game and cannot bat, there will be an "automatic out" for the first at bat only. Subsequent at-bats for this player will not incur an out. If at any time the team drops to six players, an out will be charged when it is the missing seventh player's turn to bat.
3. Protests: Protocol for filing a protest, including the timing of the protest, shall be enforced per ASA Rules with the following exceptions: An official written protest listing the grounds for protest must also be lodged with the Umpire-in-Chief within 24 hours of the completion of the game. If minimum playing time rules are not followed then there will be a forfeit by the team committing the violation. Upon receipt, the Umpire in Chief will review the grounds for protest, evaluate the rule in question, and render a decision within 48 hours. Should the protest involve a game in a division coached by the UIC, the board shall name a deputy UIC to rule on the protest. Any decision that would involve a forfeit shall be recommended by the UIC to the division director, and shall be formally approved by the board of directors. Upheld protests for playing rules shall follow ASA Guidelines.
4. Drop-dead restrictions provide that games not completed in the time frame shall revert back to the previously completed inning. Should the home team tie the game or gain the lead in the bottom half of the inning when time expires, the score shall not revert back and the home team shall be declared the winner or a tie declared at drop-dead. A game is official at drop dead.

5. Time restrictions shall be enforced by the umpire, who has the authority and discretion to add time to the game should any team be judged to cause a delay for reasons not allowed by ASA Rules.
6. Between inning time restrictions shall be strictly applied at all divisions.
7. A combination of pitchers and catchers to complete an inning, satisfying the minimum pitching or catching requirements, shall be allowed at the discretion of the umpire for injury only.
8. Face shields and chin straps are required on all batting helmets and the NOCSAE certification label shall be visible.
9. All divisions shall bat round-robin. Free defensive substitution (non-starters may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations) is allowed except as modified in each division below.
10. No player shall sit on the bench consecutive defensive innings. Exceptions may be made in case of illness or injury.
11. Game time (clock start) shall be declared by the umpire after all warm-up pitches have been completed, and the umpire asks the catcher to throw down to second base.
12. A courtesy runner will be allowed for a pitcher or catcher of record. Use of courtesy runners is encouraged to keep the game moving. The courtesy runner shall be the last eligible batter (the player on the line-up card furthest from the current batter). Should this player be the pitcher or catcher of record or on base, the player next furthest from the batter may be used as a courtesy runner. Courtesy runners may not have a courtesy runner. If it is the courtesy runner's turn to bat and she is still on base, the pitcher or catcher she ran for will return to the base or the offense will be charged with an out.
13. A batter who unintentionally throws her bat will be issued a warning by the umpire for the first offense, and shall be declared out for any ensuing offense. For all offenses after the first warning, a dead ball will be declared and all runners returned to the base previously occupied at the time of the pitch. Per ASA Rule, interference shall be called for an unintentionally thrown bat that interferes with a fielder making a play (modifies R/S 52). A player who intentionally throws her bat will be ejected per ASA rules (R/S 52).
14. Coaches may not approach a junior umpire to question a call on the field unless accompanied by the senior umpire unless the junior umpire is the plate umpire.
15. Pitchers in all divisions (except 6U), must wear a protective face mask while playing the pitching position.
16. Conduct: Umpires will have zero tolerance towards abusive language, gestures, or actions of unsportsmanlike conduct by managers, coaches, players, relatives or other spectators. It is the manager's responsibility to correct these actions immediately. Any person or persons ejected from the game will not be permitted to return for the remainder of the game AND will be subject to discipline by the BOD. Any complaint against an umpire will be directed to the UIC.

II. 6U Division

Inning Length

- The inning length will be one (1) complete batting cycle.
- The inning ends when the last batted ball is brought to pitchers circle.
- Any runner still on base path is considered out.
- Any runner put out by a defensive player must leave the base.

Defensive Positioning

- The defensive positioning will be one (1) pitcher, five (5) infielders, and the remaining players behind the base paths.
- All players on the team will be out in the field on defense; no player should sit on the bench while her team is playing defense (but may do so due to injury or illness).

Playing Requirements

- Rotate players to all positions for fairness and skill development.

Pitching

- The pitching distance will be 25 feet (Coaches included).
- 10" ball will be used.
- Coaches must pitch inside the circle the first half of the season
- Coaches must pitch from the pitching plate the second half of the season

Batting

First Third of Season

- Coach will pitch four (4) pitches only.
- If the batter does not hit the ball after four (4) pitches a tee is brought in for three (3) swings.
- If the batter does not hit the ball off the tee after three (3) swings then an out will be recorded.

Second Third of Season

- Player/Pitcher will pitch two (2) pitches only.
- If the batter does not hit the ball after these two (2) pitches the coach will come in for four (4) pitches.
- If the batter does not hit the ball off the four (4) coach pitches, the tee is brought in for two (2) swings.
- If the batter does not hit the ball off the tee after two (2) swings, an out is recorded.

Last Third of Season

- Player/Pitcher will pitch three (3) pitches only.
- If the batter does not hit the ball after these three (3) pitches the coach will come in for four (4) pitches.
- If the batter does not hit the ball off the four (4) coach pitches, the tee is brought in for two (2) swings.
- If the batter does not hit the ball off the tee after two (2) swings, then an out is recorded.

Base Running

- Base path is 55 feet.
- Runners may lead off but not steal bases with coach or player pitchers.
- Runners may only advance one base on an overthrow to any base.
- On a ball hit to the outfield, the batter and all other runners are allowed to run until the ball is thrown towards the pitchers circle.

On Field Coaches

- The defensive team may station no more than two (2) coaches on the playing field to provide instruction.
- These coaches should stay behind the outfielders or catcher as much as possible.
- The coaches on the field for the defensive team may not aid or assist any fielder, or interfere with the ball or any offensive player. (i.e., the coaches may not touch the ball)

Scorekeeping

- Score will not be kept.

Awards

- All players will receive participation awards.

Have fun with the girls; they're only this small once.

III. 8U Division

III.A. 8U Game and Equipment Information

1. ASA 10" RIF balls will be used (SR10 RYS Level 1 Safety Ball, Red Seam).
2. Scoring limit: three runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
3. Time limit drop dead at 1 hour 30 minutes. This may be modified for playoff play.
4. No scores or standings will be kept.
5. Coaches may not coach from the circle. The umpire will warn coaches in violation.
6. Free defensive substitution (non-starting players may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations), except that (1) all players must play at least one complete inning in the infield, and (2) all players must play at least two innings on defense. Batting order is not determined by defensive position. Failure to comply with minimum playing rules will result in an incident report being filed and, if this occurs during the playoffs, there will be a forfeit by the team committing the violation. A formal protest must be filed by the offended team: the offended team must bring the infraction to the attention of the umpire by filing a protest (ASA protest procedures must be followed).
7. Defense fields 10 players, and must show 4 outfielders (an outfielder is defined as a player behind the base line) until the ball is put in play. While playing with less than 10 players under the "short-handed rule", however, a team need not field four outfielders. If 10 players are available for play, all 10 must be fielded.
8. One and only one coach may be on the field for the defensive team and must remain on the grass at all times. The coach may not aid or assist any fielder, or interfere with the ball or any offensive player.
9. Pitching and catching limitation: all teams must show at least two pitchers and two catchers in each game. No Pitcher/Catcher can pitch/catch more than the entire game, minus 3 consecutive outs or one inning.

III.B. 8U Playing Rules

1. Stealing is not permitted in the first half of the season. Beginning March 10, 2014, stealing is permitted, except that a runner may advance only one base per pitch, regardless of defensive reaction. Home plate is "closed". A runner may legally score only as the result of a batted ball or base award(s) by the umpire as allowed by ASA rules.
2. Each batter shall start the at-bat with a "One Ball and No Strikes" count.
3. After ball four, the machine will pitch to the batter until strike three is reached or the batter puts the ball in play, whichever occurs first. Any strikes earned by the player-pitcher carry over to the machine pitch (i.e., the machine "inherits" the player's strike count). The umpire will call pitches from the pitching machine. The coach-pitcher operating the machine shall not interfere with any defensive player making a play on the ball or a runner and shall avoid being hit by a batted ball. Effect: If interference is ruled, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and all runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The pitching machine is part of the playing field. Balls that hit the machine will be live.
4. The pitching machine shall be calibrated before the game. No practice pitches will be allowed.
5. Coaches may not coach from the pitching circle (either verbally or non-verbally) Effect: The coach shall receive a warning from the umpire.
6. The pitcher must play adjacent to the machine with at least one foot in the circle.
7. There will be no stealing on machine pitch.
8. There will be no base award for batters hit by a pitched ball from the coach operated pitching machine.
9. Bunting is allowed on the pitching machine.

10. There is no “dropped third strike” at any time. The batter is out after a called or swinging third strike.
11. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.
12. Pitching limitation: all teams must show at least two pitchers and two catchers in each game. No Pitcher/Catcher can pitch/catch more than the entire game, minus 3 consecutive outs or one inning.
13. Outfielders must be positioned behind base line until the ball is pitched.
14. Coaches will not be allowed to physically aid or assist their players (whether offensive or defensive.)

IV. 10U Division

IV.A. 10U Game and Equipment Information

1. ASA 11” RIF FP balls will be used.
2. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
3. Scoring limit: Four runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
4. Time limit: no new inning at 1 hour 30 minutes, drop dead at 1 hour 45 minutes. This may be modified for playoff play.
5. Free defensive substitution (non-starting players may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations), except that (1) all players must play at least one complete inning in the infield, and (2) all players must play at least two innings on defense. Batting order is not determined by defensive position. Failure to comply with minimum playing rules will result in forfeiture by the team committing the violation, provided that the offended team files a protest as required by ASA rules. Protest shall be ruled on with Umpire in Chief, and forfeitures recommended to the Board of Directors
6. The ASA “run ahead rule” shall be in effect, modified as follows: If either team is leading by at least (i) 15 runs after the completion of 4 complete innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is leading), or (ii) 8 runs after the completion of 5 complete innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the game shall end at the conclusion of such inning (or half-inning, as the case may be).
7. Pitching and catching limitation: all teams must show at least two pitchers and two catchers in each game. No Pitcher/Catcher can pitch/catch more than the entire game, minus 3 consecutive outs or one inning.

IV.B. 10U Playing Rules

1. Stealing is unlimited except per ASA rules.
2. The dropped third strike rule will be in effect for the entire season.
3. The infield fly rule is in effect per ASA rules.

V. 12U Division

V.A. 12U Game and Equipment Information

1. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
2. Scoring limit: Four runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
3. Time limit: no new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes, drop dead at 1 hour 45 minutes.
4. All players will play a minimum of 6 outs on defense by the end of the 4th inning and 9 outs on defense by the end of the 5th inning. Exception: if a player arrives after the start of the second inning, the foregoing shall not apply.
5. The ASA “run-ahead rule” shall be in effect, modified as follows: If either team is leading by at least (i) 15 runs after the completion of 4 complete innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is leading), or (ii) 8 runs after the completion of 5 complete innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the game shall end at the conclusion of such inning (or half-inning, as the case may be).

V.B. Playing Rules

1. Stealing is unlimited except per ASA rules.
2. The “dropped third strike” is in effect per ASA rules.

VI. Combined 12U/14U Division

1. As 12U Division above
2. Metal cleats shall not be allowed.
3. Pitcher’s plate shall be set at 40 feet.

VII. 14U Division

1. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
2. Metal cleats shall not be allowed.
3. Scoring Limit: Six runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
4. Time limit: no new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes, drop dead at 1 hour 45 minutes.