

8U Softball Rules

LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY:

The purpose of 8U Softball is to teach physical and mental fundamentals to all softball players on the team. Teaching techniques should include emphasis on proper throwing, pitching, catching, and batting fundamentals. Additionally, good sportsmanship and enjoyment of the game is to be emphasized over the score of the game. While a score is kept, the goal of each parent and coach should be teaching a love of the game of softball in a semi-competitive environment.

GENERAL PLAYING RULES:

USSSA Softball rules governs all play except the following:

Line-up:

All players in attendance and dressed in uniform must be listed in the line-up and bat in that order for the duration of the game, even if not playing in the field. If a player shows up after the first pitch, she must be added to the line-up in the last spot. This player must play the minimum number of innings unless she arrives after the third inning. Players batting out of order are not automatically out. If the out of order situation is discovered while the player is up to bat, the correct batter finishes the at bat using the current count. If the runner reaches base and the out of order situation is discovered before the next pitch is thrown, the player who batted out of order is recorded as out. If a pitch is thrown, the correct player replaces the runner at the base achieved and play resumes without penalty (see USSSA rule book). Once a player misses her place in the batting order due to illness or an injury, she is gone for the duration of the game. An automatic out will not be charged to the team for a player who leaves the line-up due to illness or injury.

Game Times / Schedule:

Weeknight games may start as early as 5:30pm. Warm-ups may be done in the outfield or between the infield foul line and dugouts before the game. If there are interleague games (games against other park teams such as Osceola, Edwardsburg, Mishawaka East End, etc., they may start later to allow for travel time.)

Length of the game:

90 minute time limit. No inning will start after 90 minutes of game play or after 8:30pm while school is in session. The current inning should be finished unless the home team is batting and ahead.

Innings Played:

Five - an inning is over when three outs have been made by the defense, or when the offense has scored five (4) runs.

Official game:

The game is official after 3 ½ or 4 innings have been played (depending on if the visiting or home team is losing) – regular season games will only be called because of bad weather or if one team cannot win.

International tiebreaker:

International Tie Breaker is not applicable.

Umpires:

Umpires will be used in rec as well as post season tournament play. Coaches will be responsible for feeding the machine.

Inter-league Play:

Games played against any other league shall not count towards the official won-loss record.

DEFENSIVE PLAYING RULES:

Innings played:

All girls must play a minimum of three full innings at a defensive position. All players must be given the opportunity to play infield and outfield. There may be a maximum of ten (10) players on defense. Four of the players must be in the outfield and remain there until the ball is hit. The catcher must be in the catcher's box or she cannot record a foul pop or 3rd strike foul. Violation of these rules will be a ball called on the batter and all base-runners may advance one base.

Each defensive player may play a maximum of 3 combined innings at pitcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base or shortstop. A player cannot play a position they have already played in the current game. Coaches must teach players on defense to throw the ball to proper bases when the ball is in play. Example: a more skilled outfielder should not suddenly run in and cover a base from a less skilled player. Not should we be teaching a player to run the ball in from the outfield to infield. This is a developmental division and these rules should be enforced.

Infield fly rule:

The infield fly rule does not apply in any situation.

Dropped third strike:

The dropped third strike rule does not apply in any situation.

Defensive coaches:

Two defensive coaches are allowed to stand along the foul line during the game. They may not go onto the field during the course of play.

OFFENSIVE PLAYING RULES:

Offense:

Base-runners may advance any number of bases at their own risk on any batted ball in fair territory. Play stops when the pitcher has control of the ball with both feet in the pitching circle. If less than three quarters to the next base when control is established or the lead runner is stopped, the base-runner must return to the base they occupied. Once the play is stopped, umpire should call time and runners may no longer advanced.

*exception: If a ball is hit in fair territory but does not go out of the infield, there will be a maximum of three bases the batter can advance at their own risk.

Base stealing:

Not allowed. The player may not leave the base until after the ball crosses the plate. If the player leaves early, they shall be automatically out.

Bunting:

Bunting is allowed. Fake/slap bunting is not allowed.

Tagging up:

Advancing on fly balls caught in the infield or outfield is not permitted.

Runners can only score on:

1. A hit ball in fair territory
2. On an awarded base when the ball goes out of play via a defensive overthrow

PITCHING RULES:

Before game starts, the manager for home team and visitors team will meet at pitching circle to determine pitching height and speed for pitching machine. To help determine proper height, the tallest and shortest player from either team will be used to find middle of the hitting zone. Pitching will be machine pitch set at a speed "around" 30-35 mph from a distance of 35 feet. Once this is determined, it should not be changed. If a pitch is not in the strike zone due to feed/machine error a "no pitch" will be declared which will not be included in the pitch count.

*The only exception to changing pitching machine would be, if the pitches are consistently out of strike zone to at least three batters in the same inning. Both managers would meet at the pitching circle to adjust machine together. This can only be done at the top of an inning. Once an inning has started, the machine may not be adjusted. If this is done, the batter is out and that coach may no longer feed the pitching machine for the rest of the game. If a coach has a consistent problem following these rules, they will be asked to not be allowed to feed the pitching machine in any games in the Machine Pitch Division.

The defense shall have a player in the pitching circle. Player is a full participant in the defensive game. A coach of the team who is batting shall operate the pitching machine. This coach needs to be careful to stay out of a play. They should never take a throw from any player on the field. All throws should be to the pitcher and the pitcher shall hand the ball to the coach operating the pitching machine.

The batter shall receive up to 5 pitches to hit the ball into play fair. If the batter does not hit the ball into fair territory after player has received 5 pitches, player is out. Foul balls will count towards the five pitches. There will not be any walks or called strikes.

If a pitch is not in the strike zone due to feed/machine error a "no pitch" will be declared which will not be included in the pitch count.

A ball that is batted and hits the pitching machine shall be considered a dead ball. The batter gets to take 1st base and all other runners may advance one base. A thrown ball is live unless lodged near the base of the machine (play is dead and runners awarded one extra base).

Rec Season Championship and Runner-up:

Trophies will be presented to Rec Season Champs and Rec Season Runner-up

This will be determined by:

1st - Wins/Lost Record from regular season

2^{ns} - Head to head record will be used (unless multiple teams have same record). If multiple teams have same record, disregard this tie-breaker

3rd – Runs allowed during entire season

4th – Runs scored during entire season

5th - Coin Toss

End of Season Rec Tourney:

A single elimination tournament will be scheduled at the completion of Regular Season games. Team standing from Regular Season will be used for seeding purpose (tie-breakers will be used if teams have same record). Higher seed will be home team during all games except championship game. Example, 1 seed is playing 8 seed, 1 seed would be home team. Trophies will be presented Tournament Champions and Runners-Up

***It is very important to report your game results on the website by the morning following your game.**

