

**2017 RULES FOR
DAA / DEEP RUN / LENAPE VALLEY
12U SOFTBALL**

1. UMPIRES

.1 The home team shall provide a home plate umpire. If there is no umpire available, the coaches are encouraged to agree to use a substitute. If they agree to play with a substitute umpire the game is official.

.2 The home team shall provide a new game ball and the away team shall supply a spare game ball.

.3 It is the umpire's responsibility to get the game started on time. All players must report to their team bench 5 minutes prior to the posted start time of the game.

.4 The coaches are to exchange line-ups at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the game.

.5 Only the Head Coaches (or acting head coach) are permitted to participate in discussions during the game with the umpire. The head coach should call time out, ask to confer with the umpire and invite the opposing team coach to participate in the discussion.

.6 Any decisions by an umpire is final.

.7 The umpire should review the score with both teams at the end of each 1/2 inning to avoid disputes.

.8 The winning team should report the game score to the League Director following the conclusion of the game.

2. GAME TIMES

.1 Games begin at 6:00PM on weeknights unless both head coaches agree to start early. Head coaches are encouraged to start early provided they have at least 9 players.

.2 If time permits: the home team will warm-up in the in-field and the away team will warm up in the out-field until 15 minutes prior to the game start time at which time the teams will rotate until the umpire calls the players to their dug-outs.

.3 Weekend games must stay on schedule.

.4 If an official game is stopped during an incomplete inning, the official score reverts to the end of the last completed inning, unless the home team ties or takes the lead, in which case the score at the moment the game is stopped is the final score.

.5 Lightning: At the first flash of lightning, games will be suspended immediately, and all players must leave the field for the safety of their cars. The game can not resume until 20 minutes after the last flash of lightning is seen. A clear sky and lack of rainfall are not clear indicators to return to play, the 20 minute window must be used.

3. OFFICIAL GAME

.1 There shall be a maximum of six (6) innings per game. At least three (3) complete innings, or 2-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, must be played for an "official" game. Games halted due to rain, lightning, darkness or other reasons prior to becoming "official" will be replayed from where they left off.

.2 Official games halted due to rain lightning, darkness or other reasons will have the score revert to the end of the last full inning, unless the home team is ahead when the game is called. Halting official games is at the discretion of the umpire or upon agreement of both head coaches.

.3 No new inning may start more than 1.75 hours after the game's SCHEDULED start time or 7:45PM.

.4 No game shall continue for more than two hours from the official start time if another game is scheduled to follow it.

.5 Games that must be halted due to time or weather constraints may end in a tie during the regular season.

.6 Regular season games may end in a tie.

.7 For Playoff and Championship games the intent is to play a full 7 inning game. There is no time constraint on Playoff or Championship games, and games may only be ended before 7 innings due to darkness or bad weather per rule 2.4.

.8 A forfeit is called on a team that doesn't have a minimum of seven (7) players present by the end of the first inning. Games must start at their scheduled time regardless of the number of players present. The forfeit occurs at the end of the 1st inning. Both teams will forfeit if they don't have the minimum players by the bottom of the 1st inning. For regular season play only, a team may borrow players from another team as needed to avoid a forfeit including up to two (2) defensive players from the opposing team.

.9 In the case of a forfeited game, the coaches are encouraged to stay and conduct a practice game between the two teams. Any team which has less than 9 players on defense shall borrow as many players as needed to fill defensive positions starting with the outfield positions first. The borrowed players will bat for their normal team only. All other rules are to be enforced during the practice game.

.10 TEN RUN RULE: After a completed fourth inning, if either team is ahead by 10 runs or more, at the losing coach's discretion, the game may be declared over. In such a situation the game is official and the official score shall be the score at the time the game is called.

4. EQUIPMENT

.1 Ball size: 12" diameter hard ball.

.2 Batting helmets must be used and have a face shield/mask.

.3 Only official, undamaged, fast-pitch softball bats will be permitted.

.4 Catchers must wear face-masks, chest protectors and shin guards during practices, warm-ups, and games.

.5. Players may wear sneakers or rubber cleats only.

.6 Players must be able to participate safely when playing with the game.

Common sense must be used when players have splints, casts, etc.

5. PLAYING FIELD

.1 The length of the base lines are 60 feet (measured from the rear point of home plate to the outside end of first and third base).

.2. The distance from the front of the pitcher's rubber to the rear point of home plate is 40 feet.

.3. The pitching circle is 16 feet in diameter and has a radius of 8 feet from the center front edge of the pitching plate.

.4 Batters boxes are 3 feet wide by 7 feet long and encouraged where possible, and enforced if marked. Umpires and coaches should keep the players within a reasonable proximity of this area if not marked.

6. PITCHING

.1 Warm-up pitches shall be limited to five (5) pitches at the beginning of a game and three (3) pitches at the start of each half inning. A relieving pitcher has five (5) warm-up pitches. Coaches should warm up pitchers prior to them entering the game to keep games moving.

.2 No pitchers shall pitch more than three (3) innings in any one game. If a pitcher throws one pitch during an inning, it shall count as a full inning pitched.

.3 There are no limits on innings pitched per week.

.4 A pitcher may re-enter a game to pitch in a later inning providing they do not exceed three innings pitched per game.

.5 A pitcher must start the delivery with two feet on the pitching rubber and the ball exposed to the batter. Motion must be forward, a pitcher is not permitted to step back once they have started their motion.

.6 There is no balk rule.

.7 If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in one inning or five (5) batters during the game, that pitcher will no longer be permitted to pitch that game but may stay in the game as a fielder. A batter is only considered a hit batter if she attempts to get out of the way. This is particularly important in 12U due to the inexperienced pitching.

7. FIELDING

.1 The outfield may have four players. The outfield players "set" position at the time the ball is released from the pitcher's hand must be with both feet in the outfield grass.

.3 There shall be free substitution at the start of any inning.

.6 Coaches are encouraged to move players into different positions throughout the season provided they feel the player can safely play that position. It is understood that at the junior level, players will begin to specialize at certain positions.

.7 Coaches should see to it that all players sit out an equal number of times for the entire season. (In other words, the same players should not always sit out twice during each game.)

.8 Fielders must allow access to the base and home plate and shall not block or stand in the base line when not involved in fielding the ball.

.9 There is no infield fly rule.

.10 Equal Playing Time: Coaches must use the Line up Card (attached with instructions) to exchange line ups at the start of the game. The Line up Card is for each coach to monitor the other coach's player rotation to ensure compliance. If a coach fails to use the card, or use it properly, they give up their ability to challenge the player rotation of the opposing team. This is meant to be a self policing system to ensure all athletes have opportunities at all positions. Each player shall play a minimum of two innings per game in the infield, prior to the start of the 5th inning, during both the regular

season and in the playoffs. There are 6 infield positions: Pitcher, Catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, and Short Stop. As an example, with 12 players and 6 infield positions, it is mathematically impossible for any player to play in the infield more than 2 innings out of the first 4 innings. With 11 players, 1 player may play in their 3rd inning in the infield in the 4th inning. With 10 players, 2 players may play in their 3rd inning in the infield in the 4th inning....and so on. This also links to rule 6.3, meaning the only way a pitcher can pitch more than 2 innings within the first 4 innings of the game is if the team has 11 or less players. Recommended that head coaches exchange lineup cards prior to the game, but is not required. If this is not done, coaches forfeit their right to file any complaints regarding the games. Line up cards are mandatory for the playoffs/year end tournament.

8. BATTING

.1 All batters and base runners must wear approved batting helmets, see Section 4.0 Equipment.

.2 Every player that comes to a game is placed on the roster and bats in turn whether or not they are playing in the field that inning. All members of the team will bat in the order established prior to the start of the game. Players, who arrive late, will be inserted at the end of the batting order. An injured player may skip their turn at bat, but must return to their original place in the order if they are able to return to the game.

.3 Bunts are limited to 3 bunts per 1/2 inning. Once a batter shows bunt she shall not be allowed to pull back and then swing at the pitch. A player performing such a "fake bunt" shall be declared out.

.3 TEN BATTER / SEVEN RUN RULE: No 1/2 inning may extend beyond 10 batters or seven runs. When the 10th batter gets up, the team at bat shall notify the umpire(s) and the opposing coaches. At that point the team at bat will have 2 outs registered against them and play resumes accordingly. If the 10th batter is walked, any player on base runner shall advance 1 base only if forced. When a 7th run scores the inning shall end and no additional runs shall be counted. THIS RULE WILL BE REVISITED BY THE LEAGUE FOR PLAYOFF/CHAMPIONSHIP GAME(S).

.4 If a batter throws the bat, a warning will be issued by the umpire to both benches. If the same player throws a bat after the warning, she shall be called out.

.5 If the batter is hit by a pitched ball, the batter is awarded first base (even if the ball hits the ground first), providing that the batter made an attempt to get out of the way of the pitch. During non-playoff games, the coaches can agree to relax this rule and allow the player to continue their at bat if they so desire. The umpire shall not allow the player to continue their at-bat if the player is injured.

.6 The batter cannot advance to first on a dropped third strike.

.7 On-deck batters are permitted to take practice swings in designated areas as per home field rules. Any auditory or visual distractions to the game by warm up batters shall be reported to the umpire who may take action as they see fit regarding same. Practice swings: home field rules will be followed. There are no practice swings allowed at LV fields, players may take a practice swing right before stepping into the box. At LV fields, no bats in hand until they walk up to the plate. Coaches should be respectful of the distraction that warm up swings, especially with use of hitting aids (eg ball on the

stick) cause. If any team uses such a device they must be used at such a distance to not be a visual or auditory distraction to the pitcher.

9. BASE RUNNING

- .1 Base runners must wear a helmet, see Section 4.0 Equipment.
- .2 Base runners must run in the running lanes.
- .3 Sliding is not required, although it is strongly encouraged. Runners must be taught to slide or otherwise avoid contact with fielders. A base runner that interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball shall be called out.
- .4 Base runners performing a head first slide will be declared out.
- .5 Runners may only leave a base *after* the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Any runner leaving early shall be called out.
- .6 Runners may only steal 2nd or 3rd base.
- .7 Runners are NEVER permitted to steal home even if there is an overthrow on an attempted pick-off play.
- .8 Once a team is ahead by 6 or more runs, that team shall not be permitted to steal any base (even on an overthrow on a pick-off attempt). If the lead becomes less than 6 then the team can resume stealing unless or until they go head by 6 or more again.
- .9 If a runner misses a base the umpire shall call the runner out. No appeal is necessary.
- .10 A base runner will be called out if they run into a fielder attempting to put a tag on them unless the runner slides.
- .11 If the umpire views any contact between players as malicious, the player will be ejected from the game.
- .12 The ASA "Look Back rule" applies. Once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle, and is not attempting to make a play, all runners must immediately advance to the next base, return to the previous base or stay on a base they were on at the time the pitcher obtained control. Runners are not permitted to "dance" so as to draw a throw. However, a pitcher who cocks their arm to throw is deemed to be attempting to make a play. A runner who violates this rule shall be called out.
- .14 When a thrown ball (not pitched) leaves the field of play (the area past the fence lines or backstop), the umpire shall immediately declare the ball out of play. The umpire shall award all base runners the base to which they were going when the ball left *the hand of the thrower*, plus one additional base.
- .15 A courtesy runner should be used to replace the pitcher or catcher if she is on base with two outs. The purpose of this rule is to keep the game moving. The catcher or pitcher must be ready to take the field by the 3rd out or within a reasonable time and be eligible to be the catcher or pitcher. The courtesy runner must be the player on the bench who was the last to previously bat.

10. PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIP GAME TIE-BREAKERS

- .1 After 6 completed innings and the game is tied, the following ASA TIE-BREAKER RULES WILL TAKE EFFECT: Each inning from that point on begins with the last person who previously batted being placed on 2nd base to start the inning. If the

last person to bat was an automatic out (if playing with 8 players) no out is declared and the second to last batter is placed on 2nd base. Play continues as normal until a full inning is completed and/or a winner is declared.

11. MISCELLANEOUS

.1 Unless otherwise specified, ASA softball rules control.

.2 Umpires have final say regarding the rules of the game. They are not perfect, they will make bad calls, their calls (both good and bad) need to be respected and accepted.

.3 Any profanity used by a coach/player/parent shall result in that coach/player/parent's ejection from the game.

.4 Coaches are reminded this is recreational softball and we are here for the enjoyment of the girls and their families. You must be respectful to one another both during the game and in communications before and after the game. Do not act out in the heat of the moment. Any disputes with umpires, coaches, players or parent/spectators should be addressed with the League Director of each organization for possible action.

.5 Head coaches are responsible for the actions of their assistant coaches, their players and their player's parent/spectators.