



Harris Softball League Rules - 8U Machine Pitch

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:

Game play at all divisions shall utilize USSSA Official Fastpitch Playing Rules, except as specifically addressed in the Harris Softball League Rules presented here. See the link [HERE](#) for the current USSSA Official Fastpitch Playing Rules.

Players and Substitutions

Players

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.

Required Playing Time

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. There will be no catcher behind the plate, however one player will stand near the backstop fence to the same side of the batter (foul balls typically go opposite the batter when they go backwards) with a helmet with mask on. 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. Nor 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.

The Game

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.

Time Limits

Division	Time or Innings Allowed
8U Machine Pitch	ONE HOUR or not later than 8:30 pm while school is in session; or a maximum of FIVE full innings * Exception - time limit is 90 minutes in tournament play

Any inning which has been started prior to the time limit expiring will be completed. No new inning will begin once the time limit has expired.

The time begins when the home team takes the field. A new inning begins as soon as a) the third out is recorded in the previous inning; or b) a runner scoring the maximum allowed run in the inning has crossed home plate (see run limits in the next section).

Run Rule

The "run rule" limits the amount of runs scored by one team in one inning to a maximum of FOUR runs.

Official Game

The game is official after the team behind in score has completed its turn at bat in the fourth inning, or the time limit has expired. If the score is tied after the completion of the maximum time or innings allowed as stated in the section above, the official game ends in a tie and is recorded as such. No tiebreaker rules apply, except as specified in tournament play.

Umpires

Umpires will not be used except in tournament play. Coaches are responsible for loading the pitching machine.

Offensive Playing Rules

Batting

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

Base Running

Base-runners may advance any number of bases at their own risk on any batted ball in fair territory. ; play stops and runners may no longer advance WHEN ANY DEFENSIVE PLAYER CONTROLS THE BALL IN AN INFIELD POSITION. Runners MAY NOT ADVANCE ON ANY OVERTHROW MADE BY THE DEFENSE – INFIELDER OR OUTFIELDER. The purpose of this rule is to encourage fielders to make throws without penalty. If a runner is less than halfway to the next base when control is established, the base-runner must return to the base they occupied.

If the ball reaches the outfield and is thrown in, runners may only advance one base from the moment the ball crosses the crown of the infield separating it from the outfield (it does not need to be possessed).

Example: With runners on first and second base, the batter hits the ball into the outfield and runs to first base. The fielder stops the ball and throws it in towards second base, but the throw is not possessed by an infielder. The batter/runner touches first base and is on her way to second base when the throw crosses into the infield. She MUST STOP at second base, regardless of any further throws in the infield. The runner from second base touched third and is on her way to home base when the throw crosses into the infield. She may score. The runner from first base touched second base and is on her way to third base when the throw crosses into the infield. She MUST STOP at third base.

Base stealing is 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, one warning allowed if ump so chooses.

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; or 2) An awarded base when the ball goes out of play via a defensive overthrow

Defensive Playing Rules

Infield Fly Rule

Does NOT apply in any situation.

Dropped Third Strike

Does NOT apply in any situation.

Defensive Coaches

Defensive coaches are allowed to stand along the foul line during the game. They may not interfere with the ball in play.

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. The pitching machine will be set at a speed of 35 mph from a distance of 35 feet. It should not be changed. If a pitch

is not hittable 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 unless at the discretion and sound determination of coaches from both teams..

The defense shall have a player in the pitching circle. This 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 will receive up to five pitches or three swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. If the fifth pitch results in a foul ball, additional pitches may be thrown until either the batter swings and misses (i.e., a strikeout) or the batter hits the ball into fair territory.

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).

End of Season Tournament

A single or double elimination tournament will be scheduled at the completion of Regular Season games. Team standings from the 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. (1 is higher than 8)