



## 8U League Rules

The following rules are supplementary to and supersede USA Softball rules and regulations. No draft can be conducted unless at least one Board member is present.

**Age Requirement:** No Player shall participate who will be 9 years old before January 1st of that year. Exceptions to age requirements may be made in special circumstances with the Director of Softball having the final decision-making authority.

### 1. Safety/Sportsmanship

- 1.1. **Safety:** In all situations, the safety of the players, coaches, umpires, and spectators shall be of primary importance. Players and spectators are not allowed to stand or climb on the benches or fences. It is the coaches' responsibility to control their players, parents and spectators on the sidelines regarding conduct or comments to the other team's players or coaches.
- 1.2. **Sportsmanship:** This league is instructional and will require all coaches to teach basic skills and sportsmanship. If any problems arise, it will be the coaches' responsibility to try to resolve them with the Director of Softball having the final decision-making authority when required.
- 1.3. **Conduct:** There shall be no smoking, alcohol, drugs or profanity used by anyone on the field, in the dugouts or within the vicinity of the field.
- 1.4. **Uniforms:** Only league-issued shirts and visors with proper softball pants/shorts are to be worn. All players must wear their team shirts tucked into their shorts/pants. No jewelry, bracelets, or earrings may be worn. Cover earrings with Band-Aids, tape, etc., if necessary.
- 1.5. **Helmets:** All helmets **MUST** be equipped with a face mask and must be worn while in the on-deck circle, batting, running bases, and anytime an offensive player is on the field during game play (this includes running out to grab bats).
- 1.6. **Catchers Gear:** Catchers must wear a facemask, shin guards, chest protector, helmet, and throat protector. Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a helmet and facemask.
  - 1.6.1. Catchers are responsible for tracking down the softball on a passed ball and throwing it back to the player (pitcher).
- 1.7. **Cleats:** Cleats should be worn during games and practices on the fields. No metal cleats allowed.



- 1.8. **Cheers and Chants:** Cheers and chants are encouraged. They promote teamwork, motivate kids and add to the child's overall experience. No chants or cheers that taunt or make fun of the opposing team or individual players/positions will be allowed.

## 2. Field Measurements & Preparation

- 2.1. **Distance:** The field has 60' bases and the pitching mound rubber should be placed 30' from the back tip of the home plate.
- 2.2. **Dugouts:** The home team will take the first base side dugout (bench) and the visitors shall take the third base side dugout (bench).
- 2.3. **Game Ball:** The home team is to provide one (1) new 11" yellow softball to be used at each game. The away team is to provide one (1) used 11" yellow softball to be used at each game.
- 2.4. **Pre-Game Field Preparation:** The HOME team is responsible for preparing the diamond before the game. This includes:
  - 2.4.1. **Dragging the Field:** Dragging the field prior to the game. The gator used to drag the field is located in the shed.
  - 2.4.2. **Batter's Boxes:** This is done using the metal template that is hanging in the shed at MSW. Use a spike or other object to trace the inside of the template on both sides of the home plate. Remove the template and use the chalk cart to place chalk lines where you traced.
  - 2.4.3. **Lining the baselines:** After the Batter's boxes have been lined, place a string line starting at the back tip of home plate stretching to the outside back corner of the white first base (in between white and orange bases) and continuing past to the grass. The line should run through the front outside corner (furthest corner from home plate) of the batter's box you have already lined. Use the chalk cart to place the chalk line over the string line. Repeat the process between home and third base.
  - 2.4.4. **Pitching Rubber:** Measure 30' from the back tip of home plate and the front of the pitching rubber for placement of the pitchers mound and secure with provided stakes.
  - 2.4.5. **Pitcher's Circle:** Place a spike at the front middle of the pitching rubber. The pitcher's circle is drawn at an 8' radius around that spike.



- 2.4.6. **Lead-Off Lines:** After baselines are marked, measure 5 feet from the leading edge of each base (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) and chalk a line perpendicular to the baseline. This is the mark that indicates how far players are allowed to lead off.
- 2.4.7. **Half-Way Lines:** After baseline are marked, measure 29' from the back edge of each base (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) and chalk a line perpendicular to the baseline. This is the mark that indicates if a player will need to return to base when the ball is dead or if they are able to continue to the next base (at the risk of getting out).
- 2.4.8. **On-Deck Circles:** Draw a 2.5' radius circle in front of first base bench and third base bench for the on-deck batter. These circles should be positioned safely out of play.
- 2.4.9. **Field Diagram:** Please see diagram in appendix for additional directions on how to line the field.

- 2.5. **Post-Game Field Clean Up:** The HOME team is responsible for cleaning up the diamond at the end of the game. This includes:
  - 2.5.1. Raking around and filling in holes at home plate and bases after the game
  - 2.5.2. Having the players clean up their trash around the benches. All Coaches MUST collect the trash in their dugout and around the field.

### 3. Games & Scoring

- 3.1. **Scorebook:** The home score book is the official scorebook with both teams confirming the score every inning. Both teams will report game results to the league by emailing [softball.gjls@gmail.com](mailto:softball.gjls@gmail.com) within 48 hours. All games will be scored using the Gamechanger app (the league will create the teams).
- 3.2. **Game Time Limits:** Games must begin within 15 minutes from the designated time or the teams may risk forfeiture. Games will be limited to 2 hours or six innings, whichever comes first. No new inning may start after the time has expired. The time to consider for expiration is the time of the last out of the previously completed inning, the time of the last run (if inning ended due to run limit) or the time the last at-bat was completed (if inning ended due to batter limit).



3.2.1. Whichever team is winning at the expired time after a full inning is completed is deemed the winner of the game. During the regular season, 4 completed innings will constitute a finished game in the case of it being called because of inclement weather or if the time limit is reached. If less than 4 complete innings have been played, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped.

**School in session rule:** When school is in session, no game may go beyond 8:15PM. There will be a hard stop at 8:15PM and the score will revert to the last completed inning. The previously mentioned “finished game” rule applies.

3.3. **Weather:** If thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the game will be suspended for 30 minutes. If thunder or lightning is heard or seen within the 30 minutes suspension, the 30 minutes time will start again at that moment. If suspension of play exceeds the time limit and the game has completed 4 innings, the game is final.

3.3.1. If less than four completed innings have been played, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped. Both coaches are to record the score, the number of outs and how much time is left to complete the remainder of the game (2 hours total).

3.4. **Minimum Players to Start a Game:** Each team must field a minimum of 7 players to begin the game. Failure to field 7 players in the allotted time (grace period of 15 minutes from the designated game time) will result in a forfeit. If you only have 7 players, you will take an automatic out in the 8<sup>th</sup> batting slot. If you only have 6 players (due to injury/illness after the start of the game), you will take an automatic out in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> batting slots. If you have 8 players, there will NOT be charged an out to the 9th batting position.

3.5. **Inning Batter/Run Limit:** Each half inning is completed when 8 batters have completed an at bat or 4 runs have been scored or 3 outs are made.

3.6. **Outfield Defensive Coaches:** As many as 2 coaches may instruct from the outfield during defense. It is the coach's responsibility to be aware of the location of the ball that is in play and make every possible effort to get out of the way of all fielders. While the ball is in play, no defensive coach is permitted on the infield until after the play has stopped. Coaches must be in the dugout unless coaching 1st, 3rd or pitching while their team is batting.

3.7. **Timeouts:** Limit of 1 timeout per team per inning. Keep the game moving.



- 3.8. **Batting Order:** All team players present at the start of the game will be listed in a continuous batting order. Any player not present at the beginning of the game must be moved to the bottom of the batting order and reported to the opposing coach. Any player who must leave before the end of the game must be reported to the opposing coach and removed from the batting order. An out will not be taken in this spot unless the number of batters drops below the requirements of rule 1.10 above.
- 3.9. **The tie-breaker procedure:** This will not be used during the regular season. It will only be used during the post-season tournament. If a regular game ends in a tie, for standings purposes, each team will be awarded ½ of a point.
- 3.10. **Rainouts, cancellations and partial games:** These will need to be rescheduled by the Director of Softball. If canceled games are not able to be rescheduled within a reasonable time, it is the Director of Softball discretion to forfeit the game. The home team coach will be responsible for notifying the Director of Softball of any incomplete or canceled games.
- 3.11. **Umpires:** Umpires will not be provided at this level. Defensive coaches in the field will umpire and must be fair and just.

#### 4. Pitching

- 4.1. **Coach Pitch:** Coaches will pitch all innings. Coaches will pitch a maximum of 6 pitches per batter, unless the last one is fouled. If the batter gets three strikes or does not hit the ball into play within the allotted 6 pitches the batter will be out. Batters will not take a base if hit by a pitch and walks are not allowed.
  - 4.1.1. Coach Pitchers may pitch in front of the pitching rubber provided at least 1 foot remains in the pitching circle while pitching. Coaches will pitch underhand at any speed with minimal arc.
  - 4.1.2. It is the coach pitcher's responsibility to be aware of the location of a ball that is in play and make every possible effort to get out of the way of all fielders. Avoid interference as much as possible. If a player hits the ball and it strikes the coach pitcher, it is a dead-ball. The hit will be considered a single and all base runners will advance to the next base.
  - 4.1.3. The coach pitcher may not coach base runners while pitching. This includes before the pitch, after the pitch and between batters.
- 4.2. **Defensive Pitchers:** The defensive player in the pitcher's position must have at least one foot in the pitching circle at the time of the pitch. Defensive pitchers will line up to the right side of the coach pitching when a right handed batter is batting and on the



left side of the coach when a left handed batter is batting.

## 5. Base Running

- 5.1. **Dropped 3rd Strike:** The Dropped 3rd strike rule is NOT in effect. If the batter strikes out and the catcher does not catch the ball, the batter MAY NOT run to first.
- 5.2. **Overthrows:** Runners may advance 1 extra base on an overthrow at any base, at their own risk. The runners only advance to the base they were going to at the time of the overthrow (allow advancement of 1 base with no advancement from 3<sup>rd</sup> to home). There is no advancement for additional overthrows during the same batter. Example: An overthrow to first base, the runner can advance to 2nd with the risk of being out. If the ball is then overthrown to 2nd there is no advancement to 3rd.
- 5.3. **Outfield Hits:** The play is dead when the ball touches an infield player (coaches in the outfield should raise hands to let everyone know the ball has been touched by an infielder). If a baserunner attempting to go to the next base isn't at or past the halfway point (designated by a white chalk line), they will need to go back to the previous base at the **end of the play**. If the baserunner is more than halfway AND makes it safely to the next base, they are safe.
- 5.4. **Dead Ball:** Play will be dead when a play is attempted on an advancing runner, when the ball is thrown to the infield (touches an infielder), or the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle.
- 5.5. **Leading Off:** Base runners may leave the base after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Runners may lead off up to 5 feet off the base (designated by a chalk line). The 1st time a runner leaves the base early or leads off past the chalk line it is a team warning. The second and subsequent times will result in the runner being called out.
- 5.6. **Stealing Bases:** Base runners may not steal or advance a base on a wild pitch, passed ball, or the throw from the catcher back to the pitcher.
- 5.7. **Defensive Tag/Interference:** Base runners are considered out when they do not stay within the baseline to avoid a tag. Defensive players may not stand in the baseline without the ball thus interfering with the advancing runner. A safe or out call can be made with coaches discretion on defensive and offensive baseline interference.



- 5.8. **Safety 1st Base:** Half of the base is white (over fair territory) and half is orange (over foul territory). A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared a fair ball and a batted ball hitting the orange portion is declared a foul ball. When a play is made, the fielder must use the white portion of the base. The runner should use the orange portion on the initial play at first base, unless the fielder is drawn to the side of the orange base (or they get an extra base hit), in which case the runner would go to the white portion and the fielder to the orange. When no play is being made at first base, the runner may touch either the white or orange portion. When overrunning the base, the runner must return to the white portion (please make sure the 1st baseman is not in the way if the runner tries to advance to 2nd). Once the runner reaches 1st base, the runner must then use the white portion. If the runner turns into the field they could be tagged out. The runner is never out for touching the white base rather than the orange base.
- 5.9. **Sliding:** Sliding is permitted. Sliding is a technique that needs to be taught. The catcher must be taught to protect home plate but at the same time to protect herself by not completely covering the plate. A runner will not be penalized with an out if she makes contact and exerted a reasonable effort to avoid contact.
- 5.10. **Catcher Courtesy Runner:** The coach has the option to use a courtesy runner if there are 2 outs and the catcher for the next defensive inning reaches base. The courtesy runner will be the player that recorded the 2nd out. This is to provide time for the catcher to get gear on before the next defensive inning starts. Coaches are encouraged to utilize this rule to help keep the games moving.

## 6. Hitting

- 6.1. **Bats:** All bats used must be official fastpitch softball bats or t-ball bats. **Penalty:** The batter is automatically out. Bat must be marked with an ASA or USA Softball certification mark AND not be on the list below of non-approved bats.  
<https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>
- 6.2. **Safety:** Batters may not throw the bat. The first offense will result in the batter and team receiving a warning. Upon every additional offense, play is dead and the batter is out.
- 6.3. **Hit By Pitch:** Bases will not be awarded to any batter who is hit by a pitched ball. The batter will continue at-bat unless she is unable due to injury. When injury prevents a batter from completing the at-bat, the last player to record an out is brought in to continue and will have the same count as the previous batter. This pitch will count as part of the batter's total pitch count.



- 6.4. **In-field Fly:** The In-field fly rule is NOT in effect.
- 6.5. **Bunting:** Bunting is not permitted. Home plate is fair territory. A ball that is hit and makes contact with the plate and bounces fair is a hit. If it bounces foul, it is a foul.

## 7. Defense

- 7.1. **Defensive Participation:** This is an instructional league meant to introduce players to the fundamentals and mechanics of the game. Participating and playing in multiple positions is crucial to developing understanding for the players. To ensure all players are able to learn the following rules are in effect at this level:
  - 7.1.1. Players must enter the game on defense by the 2nd inning. Players cannot sit out twice before everyone else sits out at least once. Players are not permitted to sit on the bench for more than two innings in a row. Exceptions: Players are late, injured, sick or must leave early.
    - 7.1.1.1. **6 Inning Game:** All players must play a minimum of 2 innings of infield, 2 innings of outfield, and 4 innings defensively (catcher is an infield position). Players are NOT permitted to sit on the bench for 3 innings in a row. Exceptions: Player is late; injured, sick or leaves early.
    - 7.1.1.2. **4 Inning Games:** All players must play a minimum of 1 inning of infield, 1 inning of outfield, and 3 innings defensively (catcher is an infield position). Players are NOT permitted to sit on the bench for 2 innings in a row. Exceptions: Player is late; injured, sick or leaves early.
  - 7.1.2. Players must play in the outfield at least once within the first 4 innings of the game.
  - 7.1.3. A player shall not be allowed to play more than three innings at one position, except in the case of extra innings due to the tie-breaker rule (applicable only during the playoffs).
- 7.2. **Substitutions:** Unlimited substitutions for all positions, including the pitcher. Players can enter and leave a position and re-enter again. Since there is a continuous batting order, there is no need to report defensive position changes. This rule lets coaches play players every other inning, so that they feel more a part of the game. It also allows coaches to try players out at different positions and still put starters back in and out again.
- 7.3. **Outfielders:** Each team may play a maximum of 10 players, with 4 outfielders. The outfielders must have both feet in the grass until the ball is hit. The outfielders cannot make a play on the bases. They must throw the ball into an infielder to make the play.



7.4. **Infielders:** The infielders cannot be on the grass or outfield. All infield positions must be playing in their designated positions. While the opposing team is at-bat, infield players are not allowed to go past the pitcher circle towards the batter until after the ball is hit.

7.4.1. For safety, all infield positions are required to wear a protective mask.

## 8. Call-ups

8.1. Each coach will send a list to the Director of Softball with the names of the top 3 players on their team for possible call ups to the 10U league. A player cannot be called up if their team is scheduled to play at the same time. A player may only be called up to play on the same 10U team for a maximum of 3 games.

## 9. Postseason Tournament

9.1. **Bracket Placement:** A win/loss record will be used to determine seeding (W=1 point, T=1/2 point, L=0 points). If there is a tie in the win/loss records, the second tie breaker will be runs allowed. If there is still a tie, the third tie breaker will be runs scored. Tournament games will have a 2 hour time limit. No new inning may be started after 2 hours. The time to consider for expiration is the time of the last out of the previously completed inning. The team that is winning at the expired time after a full inning is completed is deemed the winner of the game. If darkness hampers the security of the players, and a winner has not yet been determined, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped.

9.2. **Final Inning:** The inning batter/run limit (see rule 3.6 above) is not in effect for the last inning of tournament games. During the last inning each team will need to get 3 outs.



9.3. **Tie-Breaker:** The tie-breaker rule will be in effect if 6 innings have been completed and a winner has not been determined. The tie breaker rule is as follows:

- Each half-inning begins by placing a runner on second base.
- That runner is the player in the batting order that precedes the lead-off batter in that inning. It is the responsibility of the scorekeeper to notify the teams involved as to what player starts at second base. If the wrong player is placed on the base and it is brought to the other team's attention, there is no penalty. Place the correct player on base. This should occur whether a pitch has been thrown or if the runner has advanced a base.
- The game then proceeds a full inning, or until a winner is declared. All other rules will be in effect, with the exception of:
  - 3.6 - Inning Batter/Run Limit
  - 7.1.4 - Limit on # of innings played at the same position

## 10. Rule Violations and Disputes

10.1. Violation of any of the provisions of the above may be protested to the Director of Softball, within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled starting time of the game in which the violation occurred. The Director of Softball shall investigate and report the complaint to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee may disallow the protest if no violation can be shown to have occurred; or it may do one or more of the following: Suspension of the offending coach for one game, order this game replayed from the moment the violation occurred, or issue a formal written reprimand to the coach. Only one such warning may be issued per season.

Director of Softball Crystal Davis - email address [softball.GJLS@gmail.com](mailto:softball.GJLS@gmail.com) or Cell Number 614-378-3366

**Appendix**

**Field Marking Diagram**

