

## **Machine Pitch Rookie Softball Division**

**Machine Pitch Rookie (8u) Softball division will operate all interleague games utilizing the current year Babe Ruth League, Inc. Rules and Regulations approved by the Babe Ruth League, Inc. International Board of Directors and published in the current year Rules and Regulations book and posted on their website. The following exceptions and clarifications will also be in effect for all games.**

Machine Pitch Softball Divisions would also qualify for any rules, regulations or by-law that utilized the terms "8u", as well as "Rookie Softball" or "Machine Pitch Softball".

These rules will apply for all regular season and tournament games played governed by Babe Ruth League and involving Babe Ruth League chartered teams. This includes both Spring and Fall programs for the Minors and Majors Softball Divisions.

### **1.0 Game Length**

- 1.1 All games will be regulated to 6 complete innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes - whichever occurs first.
- 1.2 No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes of game time has elapsed.
- 1.3 Extra innings may be played ONLY if six innings are completed with score tied BEFORE 1 hour and 30 minutes of game time has elapsed. No new extra inning will begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes of game time has elapsed.
- 1.4 Games will end in a tie if no team leads after the last full inning is played once the 1 hour and 30 minutes of game time has elapsed.
- 1.5 The above game length rules apply to all Mishawaka East End games regardless if played on Weeknights or Weekends.

**1.6 ONLY Tournament games may continue past the time regulations to identify a winner.**

### **2.0 Game Interruptions and Suspensions**

- 2.1 An inning is considered a "Completed Inning" after the Visiting Team has recorded 3 outs while at bat and the Home Team is leading OR after the Home Team has exhausted 3 outs while at bat regardless of who is leading.
- 2.2 A game is considered a "Completed Game" after 4 completed innings if suspended for any reason. This would include a game that has completed 3 ½ innings, the Home Team is leading AND the Visitors have recorded 3 outs while at bat in the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- 2.3 Should a game become suspended for any reason after it has become a "Completed Game" and it is in an uncompleted inning score at the end of the LAST completed inning will be the FINAL SCORE.

- 2.4 Should a game become suspended for any reason before it has become a "Completed Game" the game score, inning/out/lineup progressions and elapsed time should be identified by both Managers and recorded. The Home Team Manager is responsible to report the game information to the Division Commissioner.
- 2.5 The Division Commissioner and the VP of Softball will decide if the game can, and needs to be rescheduled. If the game can, and needs to be rescheduled, the Division Commissioner will coordinate the make-up date and time with both Managers as much as possible; but a final date and time will be decided by the Division Commissioner and announced.
- 2.6 Should a suspended game be rescheduled it will resume at the point of suspension and the Division Commissioner will identify the inning, number of outs, score, time elapsed and any roster issues with both Managers prior to the game. If there are any discrepancies the final determination will be decided by the Division's Commissioner prior to the game being resumed.

### **3.0 Run Limits and The Mercy Rule**

- 3.1 Any team can ONLY score 5 runs in any one inning (7 during tournament, except for the final inning where unlimited runs can be scored for each team.)
- 3.2 The offensive portion of an inning, for any team, will conclude once the 5<sup>th</sup> (during tournament, 7<sup>th</sup>) run has crossed the plate in that inning regardless of total team score, outs accumulated or any other factor.
- 3.3 No runs will be counted after the 5th (during tournament, 7<sup>th</sup>) runner has crossed the plate for a single team in a single inning. (Example: 4 runs have scored and the bases are loaded. The batter hits a home run. Only the first runner will be counted in the team score; but the batter statistically will get credit for a Home Run and 4 RBI's although the score itself will only reflect a single run for that event)
- 3.4 Any game will be considered a "Completed Game" once any team has become mathematically eliminated based on the Rule 3.1 after 3 completed innings. [REFERENCE: 16 run lead after 3 completed innings (22 for tournament) / 11 run lead after 4 completed innings (15 for tournament) / 6 run lead after 5 completed innings (8 for tournament)].
- 3.5 The game will become completed once the Home team has reached a score that will mathematically eliminate the Visiting team at the time the eliminating run crosses the plate regardless of the number of outs in the inning. (EXAMPLE BASED ON 5 RUN RULE: The Home team leads 2-4 entering the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning and scores 4 runs with one out. The game is over and considered a "Completed Game" once the 4<sup>th</sup> Home team run crosses the plate and is over at that point because the Visiting team has been mathematically eliminated).

- 3.6 Any game completed based on the "Mercy Rule" can be continued until the 1 hour and 30 minute time limit if both Managers agree; however the official game score is identified at the point of the "Mercy Rule". (EXAMPLE: The Home team is leading 2-10 in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning and the game has only gone on for 1 hour. The game is considered officially completed and the official final score is 2-10 in favor of the Home team. If both managers agree the teams can continue to play for no longer than an additional 30 minutes with no further score being recorded officially.)

#### **4.0 Players, Substitutions and Batting Orders**

- 4.1 There will be no more than 10 players on the field. There will be four outfielders. ALL outfielders must remain in the grass area of the outfield (cannot be positioned in the infield at any time). The catcher takes the catcher's normal position in full gear. Two coaches may set up in the outfield and assist with control of the team during regular season play.
- 4.2 All players, in attendance, will be placed in a continuous batting order.
- 4.3 Players are free to be substituted in and out of the field at any time as long as the continuous batting order is not changed, unless a player is injured and must be removed from the game.
- 4.4 If a player is injured or removed from the continuous batting order for any reason they may not return to the game.
- 4.5 If a player arrives after the game's first pitch they will be inserted into the next batting position after the last listed batter in the continuous batting order.
- 4.6 Each batter receives a maximum of six pitches (five during tournament). If the batter strikes out, or if the ball has not been hit into play after six (five during tournament) pitches, the batter is out. If the batter fouls the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch (during tournament, 5<sup>th</sup> pitch), the batter will receive pitches as long as the batter continues to foul pitches. The batter is out if the batter swings on a third strike and misses the ball. Bunting is allowed. However, NO FAKE BUNTING IS ALLOWED. If the batter offers to bunt, then the batter must bunt the ball or pull back the bat to take the pitch. If the batter offers to bunt, pulls back, and then swings at the pitch, the batter will automatically be declared out by the umpire. [NOTE: Any fouled bunt after two strikes is an out.]
- 4.7 If a player batting out of order is discovered in the middle of an at bat, the proper batter shall take his/her place and assume the existing count. If batting out of order is discovered after an improper at bat, Official Babe Ruth League, Inc. Softball Rules will apply.
- 4.8 All players must play a minimum of 6 outs (two innings) in the field. These defensive substitutions must enter by the top of the 3rd inning. League officials, umpires, opposing managers, or coaches are urged to prevent any unintentional violation of this rule. If a violation is discovered after the top of the 3rd inning, any substitute not yet entered shall be immediately entered into the game to receive their playing time. This rule is VOID for any player who arrives after the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning

- 4.9 Any substitution made must be reported to the opposing team's scorekeeper at the time the substitution is made.

## **5.0 Base Running / Dead and Live Ball**

- ~~5.1~~ A "Double 1<sup>st</sup> Base" will be utilized. The white portion of the bag is for use by the 1st baseman and the orange part for the batter/runner. The batter/runner must use the orange part unless rounding the bag with no play at 1st base. The 1st baseman must use the white portion, and if he touches the orange portion, in his attempt to force the batter/runner out, the batter/runner shall be declared safe.
- 5.2 The ball will be declared dead when the defensive team stops the lead runner or the runner abandons the effort to advance. Once play has been stopped, no other runners may advance beyond the last base tagged. The ball will be declared dead when a player is injured and is unable to continue the play.
- 5.3 If a batted fair ball hits any part of the pitching machine without touching any defensive player first, the ball is immediately dead. The batter will be awarded first base. All other runners return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base. (Rule 5.09f and 7.04a) If a batted fair ball is first touched by a defensive player and then hits any part of the pitching machine, it is a live ball.
- 5.4 If a thrown ball hits any part of the pitching machine, it is a live ball.
- 5.5 If a batted fair ball touches a coach or an umpire in fair territory before it touches an infielder including the pitcher, or touches a coach or an umpire before it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. All other runners return to the base that they occupied before the ball was hit unless forced to advance as a result of the batter being awarded first base (Rule 5.09f and 7.04a).
- 5.6 Base stealing is not permitted. Runners may not leave their base(s) before the batter hits the ball or before the ball reaches the plate (Rule 11.07-8U (j)). The penalty (Rule 7.13) is that the runner will be called out. The batter will remain at bat or return to bat with the count that existed before the runner was called out.
- 5.7 There is no infield fly rule for Rookie Softball Division.
- 5.8 A "Courtesy Runner" may be requested by any team at bat WITH two outs for the catcher ONLY (EXAMPLE: The team's catcher is on base and the team has two outs or 4 runs **6 runs during tournament**). The team Manager will call time-out and announce a "courtesy runner". The player who recorded the last out shall replace the catcher on base and the catcher can come to the dugout to start putting on their equipment.)

## **6.0 Pitching Machine**

- 6.1 A spring-loaded portable pitching machine will be used. The pitching machine is placed at 35 ft. with a speed of 32 mph (established when the ball crosses home plate). The two front legs of the machine must be placed in front of the pitching rubber (best if up against the front edge of the rubber or at least the front edge of any underground base for the pitching rubber). For tournament, coaches are not allowed to check the machine before their team bats. Only at the start of a new inning if both teams are in agreement or umpires may decide if adjustments should be made.
- 6.2 The player that assumes the pitcher's position must remain within the "mound" 8-ft-diameter circle, behind the machine, and on the one side or the other until the ball is hit. If the pitcher violates any of these requirements, then (1) The play will stand, even if the pitcher is involved in the play, and (2) The umpire(s) will warn violating pitcher's manager that if the same pitcher violates one or both requirements again, the player will be removed from the pitcher's position. The player can assume another position but cannot re-enter as a pitcher in that game. The player may not be ejected from the game for this infraction.  
[NOTE: The pitcher position is only referenced to a "Fielder's" Position (does not throw a pitch). Therefore, there is NO "Number of Innings Pitched" rule for a player in the position. A "Courtesy Runner" is not allowed for the pitcher.]
- 6.3 The coach for the batting team will feed the machine. Machine should be checked prior to batting. During Tournament: The umpire or a designated coach from the batting team will feed the machine. Only the umpire may make adjustments during the play. The umpire(s) is/are allowed to declare "no pitch" if the umpire(s) judges that it is not reasonably hittable. This is a *judgement call* and thus not subject to protest.

## **7.0 Equipment**

- 7.1 Softballs: Must use approved Babe Ruth 11 inch softballs.
- 7.2 All players will adhere to Babe Ruth published rules pertaining to helmets and helmet safety.
- 7.3 All players will adhere to Babe Ruth published rules pertaining to footwear and no metal cleats.
- 7.4 All players will adhere to Babe Ruth published rules pertaining to accepted bats.
- 7.5 Only "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" or "OFFICIAL FASTPITCH" bats are eligible for use in league play. The bat shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" or "OFFICIAL FASTPITCH" by the manufacturer.
- 7.6 If any bat in Babe Ruth Softball cannot be clearly identified for its make and model to determine the barrel composition, then the bat should be removed from the field and shall be placed in the concession stand during the game. Interpretation of "clearly identified" will be at the sole judgment of the umpire.
- 7.7 Any player using a bat that has been determined to have been "tampered" with will be declared out. Interpretation of "tampered" will be at the sole judgment of the umpire.

7.8 Repeated or purposeful use of an illegal bat during league games will be reported to the MBSA Board of Directors.

7.9 Possible player and/or manager suspensions may ensue based on the circumstances and review of the infraction(s).

## **8.0 Scorekeeping and Volunteers**

8.1 ONLY Babe Ruth certified volunteers and season registered players shall be allowed in the dugouts during games

8.2 No more than 4 Babe Ruth certified volunteers shall be allowed in the dugouts during games

8.3 The Home team's scorebook shall be the official scorebook.

8.4 The Home team's official scorekeeper must be identified before the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch to the Visitor's Manager

8.5 It is the home team manager's responsibility to report the scores of all games played in any week no later than each Saturday to the commissioner.

## **9.0 Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Incident Review**

9.1 Babe Ruth unsportsmanlike conduct rules will be enforced.

9.2 A batter throwing a bat, or any equipment, will be warned, and it will constitute a team warning. Any subsequent batters for that team throwing a bat, or any equipment, will be called out, at the discretion and judgment of the umpire.

9.3 A player may be ejected from a game by an umpire OR the player's Manager for unsportsmanlike or dangerous conduct.

9.4 ALL ejections must be reported to the Division Commissioner within 24 hours and a review of the incident must be completed by the VP, Commissioner, and Player Agent within 72 hours of the incident and reported to the League President by that time.

9.5 Recommendations for further actions and/or player/coach suspensions must be presented to the League Board of Directors within 72 hours of the incident. The League Board of Directors must approve, reject, or identify an alternative follow up action within a week of the incident if a recommendation is made. This vote will be collected by the League Secretary and can be made by the League Board Member in person, via telephone, or electronically.

Any IN GAME issue that is NOT clarified by Babe Ruth League, Inc. published rules and regulations or these supplemental Mishawaka East End divisional rules WILL BE determined by the IN GAME Home Plate Umpire.

This determination WILL BE FINAL during that game and the issue at question should be reported to the Divisions Commissioner within 72 hours so the issue can be avoided in further games.

Denotes Tournament Rules