



## **2024 Spring Season Playing Rules SOFTBALL – 8 and Under Division**

### **DIVISION MAKE-UP**

- Players of League Age 7 and 8, as per PONY rules. League age is players age as of December 31, 2023.
- The team roster shall not include more than eight of the older age players.

### **PLAYING FIELD**

- Distance between bases is 50 feet.
- The pitcher's plate is 30 feet from home plate.
- Fields will be marked with a circle surrounding the pitcher's mound, 5 feet in radius / 10 feet in diameter.
- Fields will be marked with 10-foot horizontal lines at 15 feet beyond 1st, 2nd, 3rd base. This determines where the infield ends and the outfield begins.

### **EQUIPMENT**

- 10-inch soft softball

### **GAME DURATION**

- Games will drop dead at one hour and 30 minutes.
- Each team will be allowed maximum 5 runs per team / per inning, or 3 outs, whichever comes first.
- MERCY RULE: Not in effect.
- Score will be kept. No league standings will be kept.

### **PITCHING**

- Maximum three innings per game.
- Player Pitcher: The pivot foot must be in contact of the pitcher's plate to begin deliver. The non-pivot foot may be in contact with or behind the plate and allows the pitcher to step back with the non-pivot foot, providing that the step-back begins prior to starting the pitch by separating the hands. The pivot foot is the right foot for a right-handed pitcher, left foot for a left-handed pitcher. **Penalty:** 1<sup>st</sup> time warning all others will be a ball.
- As soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter the pitcher shall be considered as having pitched in one inning.
- PITCHER RE-ENTRY RULE: The starting pitcher may be removed as a pitcher and moved to a different defensive position and then return to pitching only once per game. The starting pitcher must remain in the game to qualify for re-entering as a pitcher. This rule only applies to the starting pitcher; no other pitcher may be removed as a pitcher and return to pitching later in the same game.



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### **PLAYER PITCH / COACH PITCH WILL BE USED THRU 4/27/2024.**

- No walks allowed. Exception hit by pitch. The Player Pitcher will throw to a batter until she throws 4 balls (ball – walk balls / not strikes or foul balls). If the ball is not put into play, or the batter has not struck out, then the Coach Pitcher will pitch the remaining strike pitch count to the batter. Each pitch thrown by the Coach Pitcher will be considered a strike regardless of the pitch location. The batter may stay “alive” by fouling off the last pitched ball.
- Coach Pitcher: After the ball is hit, the coach pitcher must move out of the field of play.
- Coach Pitcher: Cannot communicate with the base runners while in the field of play. Penalty: First violation will be a warning and second violation will be removed as the Coach Pitcher for the remaining time of this game.

### **AFTER 4/27/2024 ONLY PLAYER PITCH WILL BE USED.**

- All standard pitching rules apply; after 3 strikes a batter is out, or 4 balls a batter is walked.
- Runners may advance base(s) only when the ball is put in play by the:
  - batter hitting the ball.
  - batter “walking” on ball 4, and runners are forced to move to the next base.
  - batter being struck by the ball, and runners are forced to move to the next base.One base advancement on a walk or hit by pitch for the batter/runner and all runners forced to the next base by the play.
- Runners may advance upon an illegal pitch, when they are awarded the next base by the umpire.

### **PLAYING RULES**

1. CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER: Regardless of defensive play. The batting order is established by the manager on the line-up sheet given to the home team’s official scorekeeper. The line-up sheet must list all players that are present.
2. MUST PLAY RULE: Each player listed on the game roster will play every other inning on defense. **Penalty:** Upon notification to the umpire by the opposing manager, the manager in violation will be ejected for the remainder of this game.
3. DEFENSIVE: Ten players may be used – six infielders, four players in the outfield.
4. OUTFIELD: The outfield is designated as starting 15 feet beyond the baseline. All outfielders must be in the outfield each time a pitch is made.
5. NO LEADING OFF: Runners must stay in contact with the base until the pitcher releases the ball. **Penalty:** Umpires judgment, if the runner left before the ball was released, the runner may be called out. Ball is called dead.



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6. STEALING BASES: Not allowed
7. OVERTHROWS: All runners may advance as many bases as possible. They do this at their own risk of being tagged out. The ball is live. Exception: Runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> base may not go home on an overthrow unless it is part of a continuation play.
  - a. Example 1: Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base attempts to steal 2<sup>nd</sup> base and there is an overthrow. The runner can advance at their own risk. Exception: If there is a player on 3<sup>rd</sup> base, that runner cannot advance to home to allow the runner going from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> base to continue onto 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
  - b. Example 2: Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base attempts to steal 3<sup>rd</sup> base and 3<sup>rd</sup> base is unoccupied. The play at 3<sup>rd</sup> base results in an overthrow. The runner can score as this is a continuation play. However, if the umpire's judgment that the play has stopped, then the runner must stay at 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
8. PASS BALLS: Runners may NOT advance to home.
9. When the pitcher is in possession of the ball (in the circle), and in the opinion of the umpire, that play has stopped the umpire will call time.
10. A ball thrown back to the pitcher from the catcher is a dead ball.
11. BUNTING or showing the intent of a bunt is NOT permitted. PENALTY: Pitch is a strike, and the ball is dead.
12. No dropped third strike rule.
13. No infield fly rule.
14. PINCH RUNNERS: A pinch runner may only be used for the following reasons:
  - Catcher on base with 2 outs. This is to speed up the game.
  - A batter/runner is injured on a play and in the umpire's judgment needs a pinch runner.
  - In all these cases, the last out will be used to pinch run.