

Instructional Softball Minors Guidelines- Little League Ages 7-9 Yrs

Consider 6 year olds if they have had one year of t-ball.

This is an instructional softball division that progresses from machine-pitch to player-coach pitch as the season progresses over a 10-12 game season.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Coaches, please have a discussion with each other before each game about the guidelines for that week and agree prior to the games start. Remember, this is about the kids. Please ensure it is a fun environment that allows these young softball players to fall in love with the game of softball!

- Weeks 1-4 of the season are machine pitch. This allows for 4-5 innings of play in an hour and a half and the game is a lot of fun to watch as parents/fans and the kids have a blast. There is a lot of action! Batters cannot walk, but can strike out. During the first three weeks of the season, coaches have the time needed to develop softball pitchers during practice. As you probably know, softball pitching is not for the faint of heart!!

- Weeks 5 and 6 will include 2 innings of machine pitch and the pitchers are introduced for the remainder of the game. The pitcher pitches to the batter until they strike out the batter or four balls are issued, then the batter's coach steps in and finishes the at-bat. There are no walks, as we want the kids to hit the ball into play, and the batter can strike out. (Coaches option: If you have weaker pitchers and don't want to watch 4 balls go by for every at bat, please consider coach pitch after the third ball is thrown. But please discuss and agree on this PRIOR to the game start)

- The final weeks of the season will be player pitch with coach backup. If the pitcher has thrown four balls, the batter's coach will pitch to them for the remainder of the at bat. Any existing strikes remain in the count. Again, batter cannot walk, but can strike out.

- 1 ½ Hour time limit or 6 innings, whichever comes first

- If your league does not have a pitching machine, then coaches will pitch to their own team.

- The 11" Jugs Softies Softball to be used for this division and the pitching distance is 35 Feet.

<https://jugssports.com/products/softie-softballs-game-ball-yellow.html>

- If 3 outs are not recorded by the time the team has gone through the entire lineup, the inning is over, switch sides.

- Pitching machine speed set at 32-34 miles per hour is about perfect for the batters and is not too fast that catchers cannot catch the ball coming at them.

- Score is not kept.

- No stealing on overthrows or when the ball gets behind the catcher after the pitch. However, you should be working with your softball players to get their lead offs, once the ball reaches the batter.

- Runner should advance to the next base if a good hit (gets to the outfield). Reward good hitting! This also allows outfielders to make a play on the ball and get it into the infield. However, unless the ball clears the fence, then there should be no "home runs"

- Tips: Use a pitching screen behind home plate and behind the catcher to keep the game moving quickly and the kids from chasing every ball to the backstop. If you have a weaker catcher, consider two buckets. One bucket of balls for the pitcher and one bucket for the catcher to place the balls into once the ball is pitched.