

Softball for Little League Baseball Umpires

Field mechanics and umpire responsibilities are identical between baseball and softball, so all that training and reps won't go to waste.

Almaden LL Softball games may be played under 2 different sets of rules, LL Softball or USA softball. LL rules will be applied only when playing other LL softball teams in a Little League sanctioned game. The differences are minor and a summary is posted to the Umpire's Corner on the Almaden LL web site.

There are also local league rules that supersede the USA softball rules (dealing with walks, time limits, runs per inning). The local league rules are posted to the Umpire's Corner on the Almaden LL web site.

10U is equivalent to baseball AAA. 12U is Majors.

USA/Local rules

GENERAL

- The Little League safety rules are not in effect:
 - Coaches may warm up pitchers
 - Equipment checks are not required
 - Ondeck batters are allowed
 - Catcher's masks are not required when catching for a coach during warmups
- Lineups
 - Continuous batting order is followed
 - 10U: Play with as few as 7 players, no offensive penalty.
 - 12U: Play with as few as 8 players, no offensive penalty.
 - 10 fielders allowed, 4 outfielders must be on the grass at pitch.
- Courtesy runners:
 - For next inning's pitcher and catcher with 2 outs (this differs from baseball in only the pitcher and catcher of record may be substituted for in baseball)
- Uncaught 3rd strike
 - 10U: no uncaught third
 - 12U: uncaught third in effect
- Bunting:
 - Same as baseball

- Runs
 - 4 runs max for first 3 innings
 - 6 innings max. Ties are allowed
 - 10U:
 - 4-up rule after 3 innings (you can go up by 4 runs), or score up to 4 if leading at the beginning of the half inning.
 - 10 run mercy after 4 innings
 - No new inning starts after 90 minutes
 - 12U:
 - 13 run mercy after 4 innings
 - After 80 minutes, the current inning + 1 additional inning can be played.
- Leads/stealing
 - Runners may leave base as soon as ball is released by pitcher
 - Runners leaving early are dead-ball out (no pitch).
 - When the pitcher has possession of the ball in the 8' circle around the pitcher's plate, the runner(s) must advance or immediately retreat to a base, unless a play is being made on them (a fake throw is a play). Penalty is a dead-ball out.
 - 10U:
 - 1 warning for each team for runners leaving early, then runners are out.
 - No stealing during coach pitch
 - Can only steal 1 base per pitch
 - Cannot steal home in 1st half of season (prior to April 23)
- Pitchers
 - Pitchers are not pitch or inning limited. There is no rest requirement.
 - 12U: Must be removed if hitting 3 batters in the course of an inning. May return in another inning, but will be removed from pitching for the game if hitting a fourth batter
 - You're going to want to read up on the Little League Softball rulebook, rule 8, the pitcher.
- Catchers
 - No catching/pitching restrictions
 - Can use any legal glove or mitt (does not require catcher's mitt)
- Walks
 - 10U: Two walks (or hit batter) per half inning, then coach pitch for any walks thereafter. Pitch count is inherited and batter gets 3 pitches max to hit or be out.
 - No intentional walks (4 balls must be thrown)
- Slides
 - Headfirst slides are permitted
 - Must slide or avoid. Sliding is not required.

- Mandatory play
 - There is no mandatory play requirement

EQUIPMENT DIFFERENCES

- Bats:
 - ASA or USA Softball certification or BPF 1.20
 - Not more than 34 inches
 - Not more than 38 oz
- Ball:
 - Minor (10U and below) 11"
 - Major (12U and above) 12"
- Batter's Helmet: Face mask required
- Catcher's Mask: must have throat protector (extend wire frame **OR** dangling throat protector)
- Double First Base: Same rules apply as LL baseball