

# Roxbury Softball Association

## Rookie League Guide & Rules

### 2024

Games 6 innings or 2 hours	No infield fly rule, no dropped 3 <sup>rd</sup> strike
Pitching distance 32'-35'	Bases 60 ft. - Ball Size 11"
Three outs or 10 batters per inning	No bunting, no stealing, no walks
10 fielders (minimum of 6 to start game)	All players in lineup; free substitution
No 1 <sup>st</sup> base on HBP (coach takes over)	Two bases on batted balls that reach grass
Batters only get 6 pitches, 3 swings=Strikeout	Batter must swing on 6 <sup>th</sup> pitch, may foul off
<b>Players pitch to 2 balls, then coach pitch</b>	<b>Pitchers 3 innings maximum per game</b>

#### Goal of the Program

At the Rookie Level, players should be encouraged to learn multiple positions and to bat at different spots in the lineup. Players will be introduced to player pitching with the assistance of the coach. Rookie is supposed to be an instructional league where the girls are learning how to make the right play, whether she's a runner or a fielder.

#### Schedule

- No game can start unless each team has six players and a coach, or an adult the coach has designated as acting coach. Teams have a 10-minute grace period. The game shall start immediately when there are six players and a coach present. Late players can take the field immediately and must be added to the bottom of the lineup. If after 10 minutes the team does not have enough players and/or a coach, the game is forfeited.
- Coaches are the assigning umpires. Each team may select one parent (one for the field (pitcher), one behind the plate) and alternate each inning. When a problem occurs about a rule, both coaches must work together with a copy of the rules. The coaches will decide if a potential safety hazard exists due to darkness, field conditions or impending weather. If any thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the game will be called. For playoff games, RSA will provide a league-assigned umpire or a member of the Softball Committee.
- No new inning will start after 1 hour, 45 minutes, from the scheduled (not actual) game start time. The start of the next inning is when the third out occurs in the previous inning (i.e. if the third out occurs at 1 hour, 44 minutes, the next inning may start.) Games must stop 2 hours after the scheduled start time even if the inning has not been completed; score reverts to previous completed inning. Coaches must agree on the start time before the game starts.
- Coaches cannot modify rules on the field.
- An "official game" is at least three innings. However, if the home team is winning, they do not need to come to bat in the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. If a game runs out of time before it is an official game,

it will be rescheduled. During the last inning, there is no 10-batter rule. You must make three outs to end the last inning to give the losing team a chance to come back if by they are down by a lot of runs.

- Games cannot be rescheduled by the coaches on their own. Email [RoxburySoftballAssociation@gmail.com](mailto:RoxburySoftballAssociation@gmail.com) to confirm a field is available on the day you want to reschedule with the reason why you are rescheduling.

## Coaches

- One defensive coach (i.e. team in the field) may remain behind the catcher/umpire to retrieve balls that get past the catcher. **No coaches on the field during playoffs.** Exception: During the playoffs, at the umpire's discretion, an adult may be allowed behind the umpire to retrieve balls that get past the catcher, but this parent may not coach or talk to the players.
- The team at bat may have a first base coach and a third base coach, but they must remain in foul territory. **Players are not permitted to be base coaches.**
- While the player is pitching, the "pitcher coach" has the option of standing behind the pitcher on the mound. The pitcher coach must remain "in the background" (behind the pitcher, outside the circle, and ensuring not to screen any infielders from the plate). Teams may designate up to two coaches per game to be their pitchers for that game; for the sake of keeping games moving, please don't allow each parent to pitch to his or her own kid.
- Coaches may not coach the other team's players.
- Coaches may not interfere with the play in any manner. If there is interference, accidental or otherwise, please use your best judgment as to the best resolution, including calling the batter/runner safe or out or calling "no pitch."
- Please try to keep the game moving in order to play as many innings as possible. This includes using courtesy runners for catchers so they can get their gear on before the start of the next inning, designating a bat girl (must wear a helmet) to retrieve the bat after each at-bat, having the girls sit on the bench in batting order so there's no confusion about who is hitting next, etc.
- **Game results:** Please report scores on the Google form that has been emailed to all coaches. Include the score, the name of the winning and losing team, the date of the game, and the league (Rookie). Winning team coach emails; in case of a tie, home team coach reports. You are encouraged to keep a scorebook, but you are not required to submit score sheets.

## Players

- Teams must have at least six players (pitcher, catcher, and the four infielders) to start a game. Teams have a 10-minute grace period for a sixth player to arrive; after which, the game shall be declared a forfeit. Any borrowing of players results in an automatic forfeit but is encouraged to at least get a game in for the people who attended.
- Batters must follow the lineup, but a player may be skipped in event of an injury, temporary absence (e.g. bathroom break), or early departure, without an out. Players may be freely substituted from/to the bench (a player who is benched may re-enter the game later). A girl who arrives late can be added to the end of the lineup, even if that spot has already come up earlier in the game.
- Players should be wearing team shirt, pants and socks provided. Proper athletic footwear is required – cleats are recommended but optional. No jewelry or earrings allowed.
- **Except in the case of an injury, no player shall be on the bench for a second inning until all players have been on the bench for one inning.**

## Pitchers

- A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three innings per game (no pitch count). One pitch in an inning is considered an inning pitched. Pitchers may be interchanged at any time and a pitcher may return to the game if she has not reached her inning limit.
- If a pitcher throws two balls to a batter or hits a batter, the offensive coach (the team at-bat) pitches until the conclusion of the at-bat, with the same count. The coach will count the number of pitches and swings but not balls (no walks). Therefore, the batter can strike out with three swings. The player-pitcher will play alongside the coach as a fielder. She may stand no closer than the coach and must keep one foot within the circle; if there is no chalk circle, she must be within 8 feet of the coach and parallel. When the at-bat is concluded, the pitcher can pitch to the next batter.
- **A batter hit by a pitch will not be awarded first base; we want the girls to bat.** The at-bat continues, but the coach-pitcher will take over for the remainder of the at-bat. **The pitch count will remain the same and that pitch will not be counted as a pitch.** If the player is unable to continue the at-bat, she can be skipped in the batting order without an out being recorded.
- Windmill, slingshot, and underhanded “lobbing it in” are allowed.
- The pitching distance is 35 feet (front of the pitcher’s rubber to the back of home plate). Pitchers may pitch from 32 feet if needed.

## Fielders

- Position of players:

*Pitcher* – The pitcher’s starting distance is a maximum of 35’ to a minimum of 32’ feet from the back of home plate.

*Catcher* – Catcher must wear protective gear. Catchers may crouch or squat but should not kneel. Throwing hands should be behind the back.

*Infielders* – Infielders may not start closer than the pitcher’s starting distance from the plate (40’) and must be in the infield (“on the dirt”) before the ball is hit. **Infielders may move closer only after the ball is hit, not on pitcher’s release.**

*Outfielders* – Outfielders must be in the outfield (“on the grass”) before the ball is hit. Outfielders may move up once the ball is put in play and may make a force out at any base by tagging the runner or tagging/stepping on the base.

- A fielder may not stand directly in the baseline path except when fielding a ball.
- A fielder may not obstruct a runner advancing or returning a base unless she has the ball in her possession. If, in the opinion of the coaches, the batter was blocked from the base by a fielder who did not have the ball in her possession, the runner shall be called safe. (If a runner interferes with a fielder making a play, either on a batted ball or a thrown ball, the runner shall be called out.)
- Runners can only advance one base on a hit in the infield. If the ball reaches the outfield, the runner can continue to run until the ball is controlled by an infielder in the infield. At this point all runners on bases must remain on those bases; runners between bases may advance to the next base or retreat to her previous base. “Control” is defined as the ball held securely in the infielder’s glove or hand. An outfielder on the dirt is not an infielder; an infielder on the grass is not in the infield.
- A fielder may attempt to get an advancing runner out, but runners may not advance; they must stop at the base they were heading to when the ball was initially controlled by an infielder in the infield, before the throw was attempted. If a player is already on the base when the fielder initially

controls the ball, the runner may not advance, even on an overthrow.

## **Batters**

- All players present must bat, even if you have more than 10 players. A batter may be skipped in case of injury and then return to her original spot in the lineup when available. If a player arrives late, she is added to the end of the lineup, even if that spot in the order has already come up earlier in the game.
- There is a 10-batter limit per inning. The inning will end after 3 outs are recorded or after 10 batters come to the plate, whichever comes first. The 10th batter will be announced and will bat as normal. The ensuing play will be treated as if there were two outs.
- Each batter gets 6 pitches. Batters will either get a hit or strike out if they take 3 swings and miss. Batters cannot walk. On the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter must swing. If the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled off, the batter will stay at bat until a strikeout or a hit in play.
- No bunting or fake bunting (showing bunt and then pulling the bat back and swinging away). • No throwing the bat. One warning per team; if a bat is thrown a second time by a player on that team, the batter shall be called out.
- If the ball does not leave the infield, the batter and runners may only advance one base. If an outfielder comes in and picks up a ball in the infield, it is still considered an “infield hit” and the batter and the runners can only advance one base
- If the ball reaches the outfield, the batter may attempt to advance to additional bases and runners may advance, at risk of being put out, only if they are past the base before the ball is under the control of an infielder in the infield. The ball can reach the grass on the fly, on the ground, or off a fielder. Once the ball is under control by an infielder in the infield, the batter must stop at her current base or, if she is between bases, either retreat to her previous base or advance to the next one.
- Bats: Players may only use ASA bats – no baseball bats are allowed.

## **BASERUNNERS**

- A baserunner must remain in the base path when running to the next base.
- If a batted ball hits a base runner in fair territory, the runner is out.
- Runners may leave base (“leading”) as the ball crosses home plate. If, in the opinion of the coach, the player leaves early, she will receive a warning. Thereafter, if that player or any subsequent player on that team leaves early, she will be called out.
- No sliding so use your best judgment when advancing a runner.
- Courtesy runners may be used (last batter who made an out) for an injured player or, when there are two outs, for the catcher so she can put on equipment for the start of the next inning. The catcher must immediately begin putting on gear.

**We have ZERO TOLERANCE for bad behavior by coaches, spectators, or players.**