

Roxbury/Randolph Girls Softball League

Majors/Varsity League Rules

2018

Highlights for Varsity Level

Games 6 innings or 2 hours
Pitcher 40' – no exceptions
Three outs or 10 batters per inning
10 fielders (minimum of 6 to start game)
Stealing all bases, including home

No infield fly rule, no dropped 3rd strike
Bases 60 ft. - Ball Size 12"
Bunting allowed; no fake, no slap
All players in lineup; free substitution
Pitchers 3 inning maximum

Schedule

- No game can start unless each team has six players and a head coach, assistant 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. (Do not wait the full 10 minutes for additional players.) Late arriving players can take the field immediately and 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.
- If umpires do not arrive, coaches need to agree on assigning an umpire. If a neutral party can't be found, each team may select one parent (one for the field, one behind the plate) and have them alternate each inning. For playoff games, a league-assigned umpire must be present; contact your League Coordinator 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. The umpire shall keep the official time.
- **Official Game:** 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 3rd inning. If, due to the "10 batter rule," it is impossible for the visitors to come back in the top of the 3rd, the game is official after the 2nd inning. That is, if the home team is winning 11-0 and time runs out before the top of the 3rd inning is completed, it will still be considered an official game. If a game runs out of time before it is an official game, it will be rescheduled.
- Games can't be rescheduled by the coaches. Talk to your league coordinator if a game must be rescheduled due to weather, school function that will leave you with less than six players, or field conflict.

Umpires

- We have ZERO TOLERANCE for bad behavior by coaches, spectators, or players. This league will be governed by the Randolph Recreation Yellow Card Rule, which can be found at Randolph Softball Website.
- The Umpire is in complete charge of the game. The umpire's decision is final and binding. If a league-assigned umpire does not arrive by the scheduled start time, the coaches must agree on assigning an umpire.
- Any coach, spectator, or player complaining about a call or influencing the umpire may be ejected from the game. If a person is ejected, they must leave the playing field and be no closer than the parking lot.
- All games must be completed, even if protested. If a game is to be protested, the coach must notify the league coordinator within 24 hours after completion of game. Within 48 hours after completion of game, three (3) copies of a written explanation of the complaint, three (3) copies of the scorebook for both teams

of the protested game and a check for \$50 must be sent to League Coordinator. Protests will be reviewed by the Rec Softball Rules Subcommittee. A judgment call by an umpire is not subject to protest.

- Coaches may not modify rules on field. Coaches should submit in writing any concerns about the rules to their League Coordinator.
- When a problem occurs about a rule, both coaches must approach the umpire together with a copy of the rule.
- Umpire's discretion – if, in the umpire's opinion, a potential safety hazard exists due to darkness, field conditions or impending weather, the umpire will decide to call the game. If any thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the game will be called.

Coaches

- No coaches on the field. The defensive coach must ask for time before speaking with his players/making a visit to the mound. There is no requirement that a coach must change pitchers after two visits, but please keep the game moving. The umpire can ask the conference to conclude or refuse to grant time.
- First base coach and third base coach must remain in foul territory. If players are used as base coaches, they must wear helmets.
- Games have a **hard stop** at 2 hours. No new inning may begin after 1 hour, 45 minutes from *scheduled start time*. 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 to randolphgirlssoftball@gmail.com. Include the names of the winning and losing teams, the score, the number of innings played, the date of the game, and the league (Varsity). 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.
- 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 must be their full uniform. Proper athletic footwear is required – cleats are recommended but optional. Girls can play in shorts but encourage them to wear baseball pants/leggings/sweatpants. 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** (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 team is winning by 10 or more runs (i.e. 10-0, but not 10-1), another pitcher must relieve that pitcher. However, the original pitcher can return to pitch after the inning when her team is no longer ahead by 10 runs, provided she has not pitched 3 innings. (INTENT: Mercy rule.)
EXCEPTION: When a playoff game goes into extra innings, the inning "count" restarts as if it were a new game.

- Pitching distance is 40'. *No exceptions.* The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitching rubber. Both feet must be within the width of the pitching plate. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter. The ball must be released as the pivot foot comes off the pitching rubber. Windmill, slingshot, underhanded “lobbing”, etc., are all allowed.
- If a ball strikes an umpire in fair territory, it is a fair ball and play continues.
- Batter hit by a pitched ball, if she attempts to get out of the way, **must take first base.** If she does not attempt to get out of the way, or if she “leans in” to the pitch, the umpire shall call the pitch a ball or a strike depending on where in the umpire’s estimation the ball would have crossed the plate. If the batter swings at a pitch that hits her, it is a strike.

Fielders

- Position of players:
 Pitcher – The pitcher’s starting distance is 40’ from home plate.
 Catcher – Catcher must wear protective gear. Catcher may crouch or squat, but not kneel.
 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 up once the ball is hit or as soon as the batter shows bunt. **Infielders may not move up on pitcher’s release unless the batter shows bunt.**
 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. **Short fielder position is allowed.** *If the fields do not conform to the normal field proportions, then the umpire shall establish a reasonable outfield line before the game.*
- A fielder may not stand directly in the base line 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 umpire, 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. (But if the runner interferes with a fielder making a play on either a batted ball or a thrown ball, the runner is out.)
- The play is over when the ball is controlled by a **fielder** in the pitcher’s circle. (“Control” is defined as the ball held securely in the fielder’s glove or hand; if there is no circle, the player must be within 8’ of the pitching plate, at the umpire’s estimation.) When the play is over, all runners on bases must remain on those bases; runners between bases must either advance to the next base or retreat to her previous base. The runners can’t “dance,” they must pick a base and immediately run to it or be called out. If the fielder with the ball within the circle attempts to make a play on a runner, the ball is no longer controlled, and the runners are free to do what they want.

Batters

- All players present 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.
- A maximum of 10 batters or three outs is considered a complete inning. A team, which has less than 10 players present, may bat players twice for a total of 10 in order to complete that inning. When the 10th batter is up, the offensive coach shall inform the defensive coach and the umpire that the 10th batter is now up. The team at-bat will be considered to have two outs, and, safe or out, the inning concludes with the 10th batter’s at-bat.
- Bunting is allowed, but no fake bunting (showing bunt and then pulling the bat back and swinging away). Swinging bunts (the batter takes a full swing, but the ball only goes a few feet) are treated as a normal ball in play. If the batter squares to bunt, the infielders may immediately charge. The batter may show bunt and then pull the bat back to take a pitch, but if she shows bunt, pulls back, and then makes any attempt to hit the ball, she shall be called out and the runners may not advance. An attempted bunt is

any movement of the bat towards the ball when the ball is over or near the plate area; the mere act of holding the bat in the strike zone is not an attempt to bunt. If a player has two strikes and bunts the ball foul, the batter is out. The batter must have both feet entirely within the batter's box when making contact.

- 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. The batter must drop the bat before she reaches first base.
 - a. Prior to any warnings, if the bat is thrown and the ball is put into play, the play is allowed to finish. After the play, the umpire will inform both teams that a warning has been issued for a thrown bat. (Coaches will remind their players to drop the bat, not throw it.) If the batter throws the bat on a swing and miss and, in the opinion of the umpire, the thrown bat interferes with the catcher's ability to handle the pitch, the runners may not advance.
 - b. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the thrown bat interferes with a fielder's ability to make a play on a ball, the batter will be called out even if no warning has been issued. (Intention: To prevent a batter from getting on base because the fielder was hit by, or attempting to avoid, a thrown bat.)
 - c. On the second or subsequent occurrence by that team, the umpire shall call "dead ball, batter is out" and the runners may not advance.
- Bats: Players may only use aluminum bats – no composite bats or baseball bats are allowed. Bats must be one-piece, single-wall, aluminum (or aluminum alloy) softball bats. All bats must be a continuous shell with no visible seams. If a batter uses an illegal bat, she shall be called out and the runners may not advance. If she uses an illegal bat again, she will be ejected from the game.

Baserunners

- A baserunner cannot run more than three (3) feet from a direct line between the bases to try to avoid a tag. However, a runner may run outside the 3-foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. If there is a "double bag" at first base, the fielder will play the inside bag (closer to second base) and the runner will head to the outside bag (closer to foul territory).
- If a batted ball hits a base runner in fair territory, *the runner is not out if she is behind the deepest infielder who can make a play on the ball.*
- Stealing of all bases is permitted; runners on 3rd base can also go home on a passed ball/wild pitch.
- A runner may leave the base (either stealing or to take a lead) as the ball crosses home plate. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the player leaves early, she will receive a warning from the umpire. Thereafter, if that player or any subsequent player on that team leaves early, she will be called out.
- Runners may not advance on an overthrown ball to 2nd or 3rd base to prevent a steal, whether the ball remains in the field of play or not. *This also applies to the runner on 3rd during a double steal; the runner on 3rd must start for home plate before the catcher's throw is becomes an overthrow.*
- The baserunner must either slide or avoid contacting the fielder when there is a play at the base she is reaching. If the runner does not slide and makes contact with a fielder who is attempting to make a play, the umpire may call the runner out if, in his or her opinion, the runner interfered with the fielder's ability to make the play. (If there is no play, it is the fielder's responsibility to avoid the runner; see Rule E.6.c.) Girls who are unable to slide should "surrender" (stop short of the base in order to allow the fielder a chance to make the play; if she doesn't catch the ball, the runner can then continue to the base).
- If a **fielder** has control of the ball within the chalk circle (or within 8' of the pitching plate if there is no circle), the play is over. A runner standing on a base can no longer advance; a runner between bases must either immediately return to her previous base or advance to the next base. Failure to do so will result in the runner being declared out.

- 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 start of next inning. The catcher must immediately begin putting on gear.

Balls that leave the playing field

- On any ball thrown that goes out of the playing field (i.e. not just into foul territory, but into the dugout, past the fence line, or into another playing field), the umpire shall declare “DEAD BALL”. The runners may advance to the base they are going to plus one additional base. (e.g. Runners on 1st and 2nd, batter hits a ball back to the pitcher, who throws the ball over the fence; the runner on 2nd scores, the runner on 1st must stop at 3rd, and the batter must stop at 2nd.)
- If the ball does not leave the playing field, but remains within the confines of the fence line, it is a live ball and the runners may advance at their own peril until the ball is secured by a fielder within the chalk circle (or within 8’ of the pitching plate if there is no circle); see Rule E.6.d.