

8U Rules:

1. A coach will pitch from a rubber located 35' in front of home plate. The coach must have one foot on the rubber. (Use discretion to help players develop.)
2. Other coaches will be allowed on the field until May 1. These coaches are there to help kids on both teams develop properly.
3. Player "pitcher" must be behind the pitching rubber and in the pitching circle at all times.
4. An attempt must now be made by a player to get the ball to the pitcher, or to a base to get an out, to end the play. For example, an infielder must at least attempt a throw to end the play, regardless of the outcome of the throw. She may throw to any base to attempt a force out as an example. An outfielder must either throw all the way to the pitcher, or relay to an infielder. Once the infielder makes an attempt, the play is over.
5. The goal is to allow for some more offense while teaching the defense to get the ball back to the pitcher, as is in accordance with Babe Ruth at all ages.
6. Everyone should be getting plenty of playing time, with players rotating positions on a fairly regular basis. If you see a team putting the same players in the same positions, it is your responsibility to make the Division Coordinator aware of the situation.
7. Maximum of 5 pitches per batter for the ball to be hit into play. The pitch limit is extended by foul balls. Coach your players to swing the bat. We really don't want to see players being sent to the bench for not swinging. Strikeouts occur when a player swings and misses when already having two strikes. No walks.
8. A batted ball that hits any part of the pitching machine, coach, or bucket of balls is treated just like a base on balls in older leagues. (batter gets first base, and other runners advance only if forced).
9. "The Halfway Rule" Finish the play to completion and then send the runners back. This lets the defense and offense learn how to make plays. Runners never stop halfway in "real softball". (stop keeping score at that point, and work on seeing players at new positions)
10. Every attempt should be made that every roster player is given equal infield and outfield time each game. There is no "stacking" of players for late innings in rec. **To specify, no players may play more than 2 innings at any one position in any one game.**
11. Games should attempt to play 6 full innings. Drop-dead game end is 1:45.

A. Official Rules

B. Use of Players / Substitutions

C. Positions in the Field

D. Batting and Base running

E. Game Completion and Mercy Rule

F. Not Enough Players

G. Infield Fly Rule

H. Obstruction and Interference

I. Contact Rule and Head-first Sliding

K. Field Preparation and Reconditioning, Warm-up's

L. Dugout Behavior

A. Official Rules Instructional games are played with Official Softball Rules as amended to emphasize fundamental defensive play, with special limitations placed on offensive activities such as base running.

1. These rules are meant to encourage the fundamentals of the game, as well as fun and fairness for all. Please make this a priority before disputing any call on the field.
2. Head coaches may discuss calls with each other. Assistant coaches may bring disputes up to their head coach, not initiate a discussion. Parents should not communicate with coaches or players about the rules.

B. Use of Players / Substitutions 1. Each player must play a minimum of three (3) innings in the field during a six-inning game, including at least one (1) inning in a non-outfield position. Unlimited defensive substitution is to be used and is critical to compliance with the minimum play provision. Failure to comply with this rule will result in forfeiture of the game. For games in which teams do not complete six innings in the field, coaches should still make every effort to have each player play three innings in the field. No player may play any one position for more than 2 innings in one game.

1. A continuous batting order is to be used, whereby all team players bat consistent with the lineups exchanged immediately before each game. Any player that arrives late for a game shall be placed at the end of the batting order. In instances where a player is either injured or too ill to continue playing during the game, that player's turn can be skipped without penalty. The continuous batting order does not change throughout the game and is therefore independent of the defensive changes made.

C. Positions in the Field 1. Teams will have 10 players in the field: Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Infielders, and 4 Outfielders. Outfielders must play a reasonable distance beyond the perimeter of the infield baseline and an extra infielder is not permitted. No outfielder can cover a base when the ball is fielded by an infielder; however, an outfielder that fields a ball in the outfield may make an out on a base as a continuation of play.

1. "Pitchers" are positioned for defensive purposes only and should line up on either side of the coach pitching within the pitchers circle, while not being in front of or too close to the coach pitcher (as a safety measure). Players must be in line or behind the pitching arm.

D. Batting and Base running. All batters must wear protective helmets equipped with facemasks. This requirement was implemented by Babe Ruth Softball before the 2008 season.

1. Three strikes on the batter will be considered strikeouts only if the third strike is a swinging strike. Each batter is permitted to receive a maximum of five pitches in an at bat. If the player does not put the ball into play on the last pitch, the at bat shall be considered a strikeout and an out recorded. If the last pitch results in a foul ball, the at bat continues under the same scenario as the last pitch (a pitch not struck will result in a strikeout being recorded.)
2. Coaches are to encourage all batters to swing at good pitches.
3. Bunting is not permitted in this Division.
4. Stealing and taking leads are not permitted in this Division.
5. Batters hit by a pitch do not receive a free pass to first base, and should remain batting. If injury makes it impractical to continue the at bat, move on to the next batter in the order without penalty.
6. A batted ball that strikes the coach pitcher or any part of the bucket used by the coach pitcher or the pitching machine will result in a "Dead ball" with immediate stoppage of play, regardless of where the ball goes after contact with the pitcher, machine, or bucket. The batter is awarded first base, and other base runners do not advance unless forced (this play is essentially treated like a base on balls in official softball rules). Note: this is not an automatic "all runners advance one base" result.
7. The instructional softball division will feature bases that are 60 feet apart from each other.
8. On plays where the ball never leaves the infield, runner advancement is permitted until the infielder has made an attempt to make a throw to force a player out, or run to tag a base to make a force out. An attempt is defined as any throw that was meant to go towards the base, regardless of actual outcome.
9. On balls hit into play into the outfield, a base runner cannot advance any further than where she is at the moment the incoming ball breaks the grass / dirt plane of the infield AND the infielder makes an attempt to throw the ball to the pitcher. If the outfielders throw reaches the pitcher that will complete the play as well. The runner is judged at the moment the ball reaches the pitcher from the OF, or the moment the relay infielder releases the ball in an attempt to get it back to the pitcher. At that point, the play should continue through to its natural completion, however, runners that were not halfway to the next base at the time the ball returned to the infield will be sent back to the previous base. For example, a runner is past the halfway point on his way to third base when the ball thrown by an outfielder passes into the infield. The runner can try to continue to third base and will be allowed to stay there if he makes it to the base without being put out. She is not automatically safe at third just because she was already past the halfway point.

10. Similarly, a runner that is less than halfway to third base when the incoming ball enters the infield is not automatically entitled to a free pass to return to second base. The play should continue through to its natural completion. If the runner is tagged while retreating back to second base, she is considered out. If the runner continued to run to third base during the same play and is thrown out, the out stands as well. She is sent back to second base after the play if she makes it to third before being put out, or if play has been halted as a result of an attempted out at another base.
11. Finishing the plays through to natural completion promotes intelligent base running and defensive work consistent with older levels of softball, while mitigating the risks associated with overthrows. Nonetheless, coaches should be reasonable in their assessment of runners' advancement.
12. Judgment regarding whether a runner has passed the halfway point is solely the responsibility of the umpire and is not to be questioned. It can be difficult for the umpire to simultaneously note (among other things) when the ball passes into the infield, where each runner is located, and whether runners are touching the bases. So if an umpire asks a coach from either side for some assistance in determining any of these items, please be truthful knowing that you too could be faced with the same difficult situation. During the end of season tournament, it is recommended that the halfway hash marks between the bases be marked with chalk when the fields are lined.
13. There is no additional advancement on any errant throw (originating from either infield or outfield) that goes past any base and hits the fence. For example, there's a base hit to the outfield, and runner is attempting to go from first to third. Outfielder's throw goes past the third baseman and hits the fence. The runner cannot advance to home and all other runners are to return to the base they were entitled to at the time the ball broke through the grass /dirt infield plane. If however, the ball gets past the infielder and stops, a play must still be attempted to return the ball to the pitcher.
14. These rules are meant to teach the girls what to expect at the Babe Ruth District level without forcing perfect execution. If there is a rule that is unclear or unstated in the following list, please refer to the Babe Ruth handbook for clarification.

E. Game Completion and Mercy Rule. There is a 4 run max per inning, with 10 run mercy rule after four innings. If time permits, teams can continue playing after the game was decided by 10 run rule if the coaches agree to play

F. Players. 10 players in the field, using 4 players spread across the outfield. You may play with as few as 8 players to start. As this is rec, you may borrow players from your opponent to fill out your OF to avoid a postponement of the game.

G. Sliding is encouraged at every base where there may be a play. If a runner makes contact with a fielder rather than sliding on a close play, she may be called out. This is at the discretion of the umpire, as younger players generally do not automatically slide.

H. Field Preparation and Warm Ups- TBOTH teams are responsible for field prep. Re line the fields if necessary. If the field needs additional maintenance, find a Board member to assist you. Warm ups can start on the field the minute the game prior to yours is over. DO NOT enter the field during another game.

L. Dugout Behavior. Poor sportsmanship and misbehavior will not be tolerated. It is the coaches' responsibility to maintain proper decorum in the dugout. If you feel that a dugout is acting outside the values of Sacred Heart, speak with the coach. If that does not resolve the issue, find a Board member to assist.