PORTAGE JR MISS SOFTBALL – LITTLE TYKES DIVISION

Ages 4–6 | Coed | Spring Season (Updated August 2025)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE LEAGUE

- Little Tykes is an **instructional league** focused on learning and fun.
- The goal is to **teach basic softball skills**, not to win games.
- All players:
  - Play in **every game**
  - Get a chance to try **different positions**
- Coaches should keep games moving and instruction simple.
- Players may be new to the game — that is expected and encouraged.

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2. EQUIPMENT

- League-approved **11" Optic Yellow softball** (synthetic or leather)
- League-approved **fastpitch or T-ball bat**
- **NOCSAE-approved helmet with face mask** (required)
- **Fielding masks required** for ALL defensive players (games & practices)
- **No jewelry** allowed
- Batting tee provided by league
- Uniform shirts:
  - Must match team color
  - Must have a number
  - Must be **tucked in when batting**

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3. MANAGERS & COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- Home and visiting teams must:
  - Clean dugouts and bleachers
  - Rake the field after games and practices
  - Failure may result in loss of practice time
- Unsafe conditions:
  - Coaches may remove players **without penalty**
  - Must notify the umpire first
- Coaching eligibility:
  - Anyone removed from coaching may not coach any PJM team

    - Coaches charged with violent crimes or crimes involving children are **immediately suspended** until the case is resolved

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4. GAME FORMAT

- Games last:
    - **2–3 innings OR 60 minutes**, whichever comes first
- A game is official after:
    - 2 complete innings OR 60 minutes
- No forfeits:
    - If teams are short players, a **scrimmage/practice game** will be played
- **No scores or standings** are kept
- Weather rule:
    - No games or practices if temperature is **below 50°F**

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5. PLAYERS & FIELD POSITIONS

- All players play defense every inning
- Catcher position:
    - Optional (coach's decision)
    - Must wear **full catcher's gear**

Defensive Setup (based on roster size)

- **5 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B
- **6 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, Short Field (in front of 2B)
- **7 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, LF, RF
- **8 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, LF, CF, RF
- **9 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, LF, LCF, RCF, RF
- **10 players:** P, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, Short Field, LF, LCF, RCF, RF

Player Rotation Rules

- Players should rotate positions every game
- No player may play more than **2 innings in the outfield** per game
- Every player must play **at least 1 inning in the infield**
- Outfielders:
    - Must stay in the grass
    - Must be evenly spaced
- No player may stand closer than halfway between home plate and the bases

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6. PITCHING

- Players may:
  - Hit coach-pitched balls OR
  - Use a batting tee
- Coaches pitch to their own team
- Pitching distance: **30–35 feet**
- Rules:
  - 4 coach pitches maximum
  - If ball is not hit after 4 pitches → **use tee**
  - No strikeouts
  - No walks
- Adult catcher (coach preferred) may be used
- Coach pitcher:
  - May pitch from the rubber if player can hit live pitching
  - Does not have to leave fair territory
  - Must try **not to interfere** with play

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7. BATTING RULES

- Entire roster bats each game
- No strikeouts
- Ball must travel past **10-foot arc** in front of home plate to be fair
- After 4 pitches, tee is used until ball is hit
- If ball reaches the outfield:
  - Batter may advance **one extra base**
- Last batter each inning:
  - Hits a **home run** to clear the bases
  - Inning ends after this batter
- Purpose: help players learn base running
- Helmets with face guards required for:
  - Batter
  - On-deck batter
  - All base runners
- Each player bats at least **twice per game**
  - First half of season: focus on batting
  - Second half: begin working on outs

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8. BASE RUNNING / STOP PLAY

- Players may advance **one base** on an infield hit
- Second half of season:
  - Leading off is allowed
  - **No stealing bases**

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9. COACHING & MISC. RULES

- Substitute players allowed:
  - From same division
  - With parent approval
- Coaches should rotate batting order so all players bat last during the season
- Defensive coaches:
  - Unlimited on field
  - Purpose: teaching and focus
- Offensive coaches:
  - Two allowed (1st base and 3rd base)

REMEMBER: This division is about **learning, safety, confidence, and fun** 🎉