

Softball Rules Meeting 2008

LOCAL RULES

Minor League

1. Each team will play 10 players in the field (4 outfielders – LF, LC, RC, RF). **The outfielders are to be positioned at least 10 feet into the grass.**
2. Fielders **may not** change positions during a half-inning other than for substitutions.
3. Special rules regarding use of the pitching machine:
 - A. A coach or parent from the batting team is responsible for feeding the pitching machine. No coaching is allowed from this position.
 - B. The speed of the pitching machine should be set at **38** rpm.
 - C. Adjustments to the aim of the pitching machine should be made **only** when absolutely necessary and then only at the beginning of an inning.
 - D. “Feed” the pitching machine in a consistent manner throughout the game (seams down).
 - E. The pitching machine is not in play. When a batted or thrown ball hits the machine, it immediately becomes a dead ball. The batter advances to first base only and any runners advance one base only if forced.
 - F. The adult who is feeding the pitching machine is in play. If a batted or thrown ball hits this person, the ball is still in play.
 - G. The fielder in the pitching position shall have both feet within the pitching circle and be even with, or behind the pitcher’s rubber when the ball is released from the pitching machine.
 - H. There are **no** walks, but strikes will be called if the batter misses a pitch or does not swing at a pitch in the strike zone.
4. Bunting is not allowed. A bunt will be called a no pitch.
5. Stealing is not allowed.
6. If the ball is in the infield controlled by a fielder and it is being returned to the mound, the runners must return to their previous base unless they are over halfway to the next base (in which case they can take that base only). Where the runners were located when this occurs will be a judgment call for the umpire.
7. **Teams must start the game with at least 8 players from their team** (If there are not 8, the game will be forfeited). Substitute players may only be obtained from teams who played the previous minor league game. A substitute player must bat **last** in the batting order and only play the outfield.
8. No infield or outfield practice is to be taken between half-innings.

Major League

1. Special rules regarding use of the pitching machine:

- A. A coach or parent from the batting team is responsible for feeding the pitching machine. No coaching is allowed from this position.
 - B. The speed of the pitching machine should be set at **50** rpm for the first two weeks of the season, then increased to **55** rpm for the third and fourth weeks, and finally increased to **60** rpm for the fifth and sixth weeks and the end-of-season tournament.
 - C. Adjustments to the aim of the pitching machine should be made **only** when absolutely necessary and then only at the beginning of an inning.
 - D. “Feed” the pitching machine in a consistent manner throughout the game (seams down).
 - E. The pitching machine is not in play. When a batted or thrown ball hits the machine, it immediately becomes a dead ball. The batter advances to first base only and any runners advance one base only if forced.
 - F. The adult who is feeding the pitching machine is in play. If a batted or thrown ball hits this person, the ball is still in play.
 - G. The fielder in the pitching position shall have both feet within the pitching circle and be even with, or behind the pitcher’s rubber when the ball is released from the pitching machine.
 - H. There are **no** walks, but strikes will be called if the batter misses a pitch or does not swing at a pitch in the strike zone.
 - I. Bunting is not allowed when the pitching machine is being used. A bunt will be called a no pitch.
 - J. The home team is responsible for putting away the pitching machine.
2. No slap bunts allowed.
 3. Once the batter squares to bunt, she may **not** swing away or she will be declared out.
 4. **Teams must start the game with at least 7 players from their team** (If there are not 7, the game will be forfeited). **Teams must have at least 8 players to start the game although they are strongly encouraged by our local board to start with 9 players.** A fill-in minor league player cannot play any more innings than any rostered major league player. A substitute player must bat **last** in the batting order and only play the outfield.
 5. In our perfect WLLL world, here is the procedure for picking up the needed substitute players. As soon as each major manager knows how many players he needs for the next game, he first needs to communicate with the opposing major manager. Then one (or both) of the major managers communicates this number with each of the involved minor managers and agrees with the minor managers on how many players from each team are needed for the major game. As each minor manager turns in his batting order to the Official Scorer before the game, he designates his players who are available and needed for playing in that night’s major game. These names are put into a hat. The major managers then meet before their game and draw the needed number of players out of the hat with the visiting team drawing first. If the home team needs more substitute players than the visiting team, then it draws first
It is suggested by the board that before the season starts, every minor team develops a list of possible substitute players. Once a minor player on this list is picked up for a major game she moves to the bottom of the list. **No 9 year olds or younger are allowed to substitute in the Major League.**

6. **At least two pitchers on each team need to be used each week. If the starting pitcher goes 2 or more innings in one game, then she cannot start the next game for her team (whether it is in the same week or the next week).**
7. Umpires will enforce one minute in between each half-inning for warm-ups.

Minor and Major Leagues

1. **In both the minor and major leagues, all players will be in the batting order for the entire game.** A player may be entered and/or re-entered defensively into the game anytime provided she meets the requirements of mandatory play. Every player in the batting order still needs to play defensively for a minimum of six (6) outs. These 6 outs do not have to be consecutive.
2. **Every player must wear a facemask helmet when batting and on base.**
3. The home team shall occupy the third base dugout. The visiting team shall occupy the first base dugout.
4. There is a seven run rule per half-inning. Once the seventh run has crossed the plate the half-inning is over.
5. There is no infield fly rule.
6. On game days this schedule should be followed by both teams:

MINOR LEAGUE

4:30 - 4:50	Visiting team has the batting cage (batting practice is NOT to take place on the field)
4:50 - 5:10	Home team has the batting cage
5:10 - 5:20	Visiting team takes infield/outfield
5:20 - 5:30	Home team takes infield/outfield and remains on the field for the start of the game
5:30	Game starts (Before school is out, no inning shall start after 7:00 p.m. After school is out, no inning shall start after 7:30 p.m. An inning starts the moment the third out is made in the bottom of the previous inning.)

NOTE: The home team is responsible for setting up the GAME machine. The “A” machine is the GAME machine and the “B” machine is for the batting cage before the games.

MAJOR LEAGUE

6:30 - 6:50	Visiting team has the batting cage (batting practice is NOT to take place on the field)
6:50 - 7:10	Home team has the batting cage
7:10 - 7:20	Visiting team takes infield/outfield
7:20 - 7:30	Home team takes infield/outfield and remains on the field for the start of the game

7:30 Game starts. (Before school is out, no inning shall start after 9:15 p.m. After school is out, no inning shall start after 10:00 p.m. An inning starts the moment the third out is made in the bottom of the previous inning.)

NOTE: The home team is responsible for putting away both the GAME machine and any other equipment used in the batting cage/area (second pitching machine, tees, etc.).

7. All players **must** wear either a visor or a baseball hat while in the field.
8. No more than three adults may be in the dugout at any one time. Adults must remain either in the dugout or behind the fence during live ball situations, except when coaching the bases. There can be two adult coaches on the bases, provided there is still an adult in the dugout.

SOFTBALL RULES

Major League

1. A catcher need not catch a third strike for the batter to be declared out, but runners may advance.
2. A batter who bunts the ball foul with two strikes is out.
3. Any forward movement of the bat during a **bunt attempt** is considered a swing.
4. The runner is out if she fails to keep contact with the base until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter. The ball is dead and “No Pitch” is declared. **Note:** if the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher’s circle and is not making a play (a fake throw is considered a play), runners not in contact with their bases must immediately attempt to advance or return to their base. If they don’t, the ball is dead. “No Pitch” is declared, and the runner is out.
5. If a player pitches in more than one (1) inning, one calendar day of rest is mandatory. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched in an inning.
6. A manager or coach may visit with the pitcher no more than twice in any inning. The pitcher must be removed during the third visit. A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game but only once in the same inning as she was removed.
7. A manager or coach may come out three times in one game to visit with the pitcher, but the fourth time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher.

Both Major and Minor Leagues (key rules and situations)

1. The **strike zone** is the space over home plate which is between the batter’s armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The ball only needs to pass through a portion of the zone to be considered a strike. **Be liberal with the strike zone.** A ball that touches the ground and the batter swings and misses shall be declared a strike.

2. A **foul ball** is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first or home and third, or that bounds past first or third in foul territory, or that first falls in foul territory past first or third, or that touches any person, player, umpire or object in foul territory.
3. A **foul tip** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand. A foul tip can only be caught by the catcher.
4. A batter who is **hit by a pitch** is awarded first base. The umpire should yell out, "dead ball." The batter must make some attempt to avoid the pitch. The pitch must not be in the strike zone or it is a strike. If the pitch touches the ground first and then hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base. Please note: a batter's hand is not part of the bat but the same as getting hit anywhere else. A batter who is **hit by a pitch** while swinging is not awarded first base. The pitch is ruled a strike and the ball is dead.
5. The bat must come through the hitting zone (cross the plate) to be considered a **swing**.
6. Offensive **interference** is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. The ball is dead, the runner or batter is out, and any runners return to the last base that was legally touched at the time of the interference.
7. **Catcher's interference** occurs when the catcher's mitt touches the batter's bat when attempting to swing. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. Other runners advance if forced. If the batter hits the ball and advances past first base, the interference is ignored.
8. **Obstruction** is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. It does not have to be an intentional act. A fake tag is considered obstruction. The runner must have a reasonable chance of advancing for obstruction to be called. Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, baseline, or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball. This is often a delayed dead ball situation and bases are not awarded until after the play is over. If the runners advance prior to the play finishing, the call is waved off. The umpire should give the obstruction sign.
9. If a play is being made on a runner at a base, the runner must either slide or **avoid contact** with the fielder. If the runner does not avoid contact with the fielder, the runner is declared out.
10. A batter who hits the ball with **one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box** shall be declared out and the ball is dead.
11. A batter or a runner who is **hit by a batted ball** in fair territory shall be declared out and the ball is dead. All runners return to their bases. If the batted ball has already passed an infielder other than the pitcher or catcher, the call is not made.
12. If, while the ball is alive, two runners are touching the same base, the following runner shall be out when tagged.
13. **Awarding bases:**

Two bases, if a fair ball bounces or is deflected into the stands or goes under or through a fence.

Two bases, when a thrown ball goes into dead ball territory. The award is made from the time of the throw.

One base, when a pitched ball goes into dead ball territory.

14. A runner is declared out when running more than three feet **away from a direct line between bases** (explain how this line may change) to avoid being tagged, unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.

15. **Appeal plays:**

- A. can be made for a missed base or failure to tag up after a fly out.
- B. must be clearly intended as an appeal by a verbal request by a player.
- C. must be made during a live ball situation.
- D. only one appeal shall be attempted on the same runner at the same base.

SAFETY RULES

1. All batters and runners must wear a facemask helmet while on the field (even while running off the field after an out or between innings). Players coaching first base must also wear a facemask helmet.
2. It is the manager/coach's responsibility to make sure that all jewelry is removed.
3. Catchers must wear appropriate protection.
4. Only one player is allowed in the on-deck cage at a time. (All other players must remain in the dugout.) **The on-deck batter may not hold or swing a bat.**
5. All bats are to remain outside the on-deck cage.
6. All gates to the field should be kept closed at all times.
7. Head first slides are **not** allowed. The runner is ruled out. A runner may dive back into a base.
8. **LOCAL RULE** - The first time the batter throws the bat, the plate umpire issues a warning to the batter after the play is over. (This is noted by the official scorer.) If this **same** batter in the same game throws the bat a second time, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and any runners return to the last base that was legally touched at the time of the pitch.
9. In case of inclement weather, the game can be called in advance **only** by league officials. Once the game starts, only the umpire can delay or suspend play. If the game is stopped and cannot be resumed, it is a complete game after four innings or three and a half innings if the home team is ahead. If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, but after one or more innings have been played, it shall be resumed exactly where it left off. All records, including pitching, shall be counted.