

## Interleague Girls Softball Playing Rules 2022

Revised 3/1/2022

*The Interleague Girls Softball Playing Rules will follow the USA Softball (formerly known as +exceptions and/or clarifications which all leagues agree to follow.*

### **COACHES MUST MEET AT HOME PLATE AND DISCUSS RULES**

### **EITHER PLAY BY THESE RULES OR UNANIMOUSLY AGREE TO ANY CHANGES**

#### 8U

Coaches will request time-outs from the umpire (when applicable) to clarify when the ball is “dead” and not in play. This will be interpreted to be when a defensive player has possession of the ball at or near the pitching circle, or when no further action is underway and the ball is near a base, when an outfielder attempts to return the ball to any infielder, the pitching circle, or when an infielder attempts to return the ball to the pitcher. The purpose of this definition is to motivate outfielders to return a batted ball immediately to an infielder and to motivate infielders to make plays on or stop the forward progress of runners with the least number of throws.

#### 10U

A dead ball rule shall be in effect for 10U. A dead ball will be declared when the ball is within the pitcher’s circle. Once the dead ball is declared, the umpire shall make a judgment call on the progress of the base runner(s). If the base runner(s) is  $\frac{1}{2}$  way to the next base they shall be awarded that base. If the base runner(s) is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  ways to the next base they shall be returned to the previous base.

There will be no infield fly rule in effect for 8U play.

There will be no infield fly rule in effect for 10U play.

### ***Inning***

#### **6U**

1.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the players in lineup will bat each inning. Example (If a team has 12 players, half of the players will bat each inning.)

#### **8U, 10U, 12/14U & Up**

1. **Run Limit Rule:** The number of runs that can be scored by each team in an inning will be limited. This rule option will be applied for 8U Division and above. At 8U, a limit of 4 runs for the first 2 innings. At 10U, a limit of 4 runs for the first three innings only. At 12U/14U, a limit of 4 runs for for the first four innings only except when playing games against Alameda. These games would be a limit of 4 runs for the for the first three innings.

#### **8U – 10U**

2. **The Nine Batter Option:** For 8U , this option comes into effect\_in the third inning, when the 4-run limit rule is used. The nine-batter option starts in the top of third inning. If the inning goes to the ninth batter the inning does not end on a walk. For example if the ninth batter walks the tenth batter comes up to bat. All runs that have scored before the end of the half-inning are counted.

3. **For 10U** , this option comes into effect in the fourth inning, when the 4-run limit rule is used. The nine-batter option starts in the top of fourth inning. If the inning goes to the ninth batter the inning does not end on a walk. For example if the ninth batter walks the tenth batter comes up to bat. All runs that have scored before the end of the half-inning are counted.

The nine-batter inning ends:

- a. Three outs are made before the ninth batter
- b. Or if there are two outs or less when, the starting with ninth batter, either strikes out or puts the ball in play regardless of the number of outs

The ninth batter could score if:

- c. The defense fails to stop the ninth batter before this batter-runner legally touches home plate, or
- d. The ninth batter is directed home by an umpire due to a penalty being called against the defense

The only way a tenth, eleventh, or any succeeding batters would come to bat is if the pitcher walks or hits the batter and then play will continue (i.e. inning cannot end with a “hit by pitch or walk”).

Note=> the intent of the rule is to not let the defensive team end an inning by walking a batter or hitting a batter with a pitch. All batters in the inning can score a legally counted run (e.g. the bases are loaded with one out. The ninth batter is up and four runs have already scored in the half-inning. The ninth batter walks. Therefore a tenth batter bats. The tenth batter walks. Therefore an eleventh batter bats. The eleventh batter hits a grand slam. The team has scored ten runs for the half-inning and the half-inning is over because the batter put the ball in play by hitting the ball.)

## **Strike**

### **6U**

There are no strikes called or charged in 6U division games. All rules that involve strikes or called strikes do not apply to the 6U division.

## **RULE 2. THE PLAYING FIELD**

### **Section 1**

#### **Official Distance Table:**

| <i>Division</i> | <i>Bases</i> | <i>Pitching Distance</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 6U – 8U         | 50 ft.       | 32 ft.                   |
| 10U             | 60 ft.       | 35 ft.                   |
| 12U-and up      | 60 ft.       | 40 ft.                   |

Pitching Distances are measured from the front edge of the pitching plate to the back point of home plate.

**No Play Arc (6U):** A curved line in fair territory ten feet out from home plate that a ball batted from the tee must pass to be considered legally batted and behind which defensive players must play. This is up to the discretion of the coaches to use this rule. It is not necessary to implement this rule in 6U.

### ***Section 3.***

#### **h. Double Base**

A double base should always be used (when available) at first base for all divisions

**NOTE** => If, during the game, the base or the pitching distances are found to be wrong, correct the error at the start of the next full inning and continue playing the game.

### **RULE 3. EQUIPMENT.**

All USA Softball equipment rules will be followed with certain additions and clarifications:

#### **Sec.3 – Official Softball**

| <i>Division</i> | <i>Ball</i>    |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 6U – 8U         | 10” Soft       |
| 10U             | Regulation 11” |
| 12U- and up     | Regulation 12” |

#### **Section 6 – Uniform**

1. All players will wear shirts, hats, visors (optional), socks provided by the league or team.
2. All players in the 10U division and up should wear sliding pants. (In all cases, player safety must be the primary determinant behind rule enforcement for sliding.)
3. All players must wear a batting helmet with facemask when they step out of the dugout into the field of play with the game underway. The only exception is when they are on the field in a defensive position (infield, outfield, pitching, or catching)
4. For all age divisions, no metal cleats or spikes shall be worn at any time.

### **RULE 4. Players, Coaches, and Substitutes**

#### **Section 1 – Players**

##### **A. Required Number of Players**

1. *6U division* shall place a maximum of 10 players out on the field of play, with no minimum of players needed to play a game.
2. *8U/10U divisions* shall place a maximum of 10 players on the field, with players positioned at Catcher, Pitcher, First Base, Second Base, Short-Stop, Third Base, Right field, Right Centerfield, Left Centerfield and Left field. The outfielders must be positioned at least 15 feet behind the base line.
3. *12U – and up* shall field 9 players on defense: Catcher, Pitcher, First Base, Second Base, Short-Stop, Third Base, Right field, Center field and Left field.

*Eligible Players* - All coaches MUST make attempts to play all eligible players a minimum of two (2) innings in the field and at least one at bat. All players may be in the lineup to hit even though they are not playing in the field. Players can exit and re-enter the line-up at all times.

##### **D – Short-Handed Rule**

Adopted with the following additions and clarifications:

1. For interleague play, the leagues have also agreed that a team may "borrow" another player (except that a borrowed player is ineligible to pitch) from another team in the same division or the short-handed team may bring a player up from a lower age division in order to field nine players. This rule does not apply to the 14U Division. A 14U team may borrow a player from another within their own league to field a complete team.  
For the playoffs, a team may only borrow a player from a lower age division

In the spirit of fair play coaches of short-handed teams should notify the opposing coaches that they require borrowed players and the skill of their borrowed players at some point in time before the start of the game in which the borrow players will play.

### **Section 8 –Coach**

#### **A – Responsible for team on the field**

1. Field Manager (10U and up): The Team Head Coach will be the field manager at beginning of game, to represent team in discussions with umpires, request time, and direct the defense unless Team Manager advises plate umpire otherwise.

## **RULE 5. THE GAME**

### **Section 3 – Regulation Game**

#### **A - Number of innings**

Maximum number of innings per division as follows:

| <i>Division</i> | <i># innings</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 6U-10U          | 5 innings        |
| 12U             | 6 innings        |
| 12/14 hybrid    | 7 innings        |
| 14U- up         | 7 innings        |

### **Section 9 – Run-Ahead Rule**

#### **A. Run Ahead**

1. Fast Pitch - (8U-and up): Game is ended if one team leads by 10 or more runs after 5 innings (4-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead).
2. Run Limit Rule: The number of runs that can be scored by each team in an inning will be limited. This rule option will be applied for 8U Division and above as a limit of 4 runs for the first three innings only. (Refer to Rule 1 – Innings - for definition of when a half-inning ends in subsequent innings)

### **Section 10 - Time Limit Rule**

1. 6U – One Hour Game. No full inning shall start after 45 minutes as all teams must bat an equal amount of times.
2. 8U – 10U - No new inning to start after 1:30 (one hour and thirty minutes) has elapsed. One hour and forty-five minutes maximum game time drop dead.
3. 12U and up: Two hour fifteen minutes maximum drop dead. No new inning shall start after 2:00(2 hours) has elapsed.
4. Drop Dead rules do not apply to playoffs or championship play, in which case the final inning shall be played to completion. However, the "no new inning" rule shall remain in effect.

## **RULE 6. PITCHING RULES**

### **Interleague/Intraleague (8U)**

All interleague games will make use of player/pitch, coach/pitch rules for the entire season.

### ***Additional rules***

Following rules are added to Rule 6 of the ASA Rules:

### **Adult Pitchers (6U – 8U):**

In order to move the game along, an adult member from the batting team may pitch to a batter when:

1. The adult pitcher will deliver the ball to the batter from the pitching plate at the proper distance for their division (currently 32ft for 8U and a “safe” distance for 6U)
2. The player pitcher will stand even with the pitching plate to the right or left of the adult pitcher.
3. The player pitcher may not move until the ball has been released from the adult pitcher to the batter.
4. The adult pitcher will remain within the pitching circle and avoid interfering with the defense until all play has completed (umpire calls time).

### **6U Pitching Rules**

1. The adult pitcher may pitch a maximum of four (4) pitches to deliver to the batter before a Tee is used. The batter takes as many swings from the tee until the ball is put into play. There are no walks or strikeouts

### **8U Pitching Rules**

1. There are no walks, and strikes are counted
2. If the count to the batter reaches four balls, as judged by the umpire, an adult pitcher will enter the game.
3. The strike count on the batter by the player pitcher will remain, and the ball count will revert to no balls.
4. After entering the game, the adult pitcher has a total of three (3) pitches or until the batter
  - i. Reaches base safely
  - ii. Strikes out
5. If the batter is hit by a ball pitched by a player, then it is ruled a hit-by-pitch and the batter is awarded first base. If the batter is hit by an adult pitcher; the pitch will be considered a ball. Also coaches may agree to amend this rule so the batter can continue to bat.

NOTE: If the batter fouls the 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or subsequent pitch(s) from the adult pitcher, the batter will continue to bat.

6. Coach pitching technique is not subject to an “illegal pitch” call by the umpire or opposing coach, as long as the intent of the pitching style is underhand and intended to allow the batter to hit the ball. *The coach must start the pitching motion with at least one foot on the pitching rubber.*

7. 8U Coach Pitchers MUST hustle “IN” and “OUT” of the circle. They should not “walk” to the Circle. They should keep up with the count and be prepared to hustle to the circle when the player pitcher has reached Ball Four.

### **Hitting Three Batters**

A pitcher who hits three batters in one inning will be immediately removed from pitching during that inning.

1. The player may be moved to defense, and come back in to pitch in a subsequent inning.
2. If the player returns to the game and again hits a batter (their fourth batter) then the player pitcher will no longer be eligible to pitch during that game.

### **Pitching Eligibility (All age groups)**

Pitching eligibility will be recorded by innings per game.

1. One pitcher will be allowed to pitch all BUT two innings per game.
2. One pitcher may not pitch more than two (2) of the first four (4) innings( 8U- A girl can only pitch 1 of the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 innings)
3. (4 run rule innings and 9 batter innings count as one inning).
4. One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

**NOTE: In seasons where there are several age-pure 12U teams, hybrid 12U/14U teams, and one age-pure 14U team all playing in the same division. The 14U rules will only apply to the games involving the age-pure 14U team.**

### **Out of the Defense Pitching Rule**

1. (8U-and up): All players are eligible to pitch, even girls who previously pitched in the game and were removed from the defense.

### **Charged Conferences**

1. There shall be one charged conference between a coach and each pitcher in an inning
2. After the second charged conference during an inning, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of that inning.

## **RULE 7. BATTING.**

**Batting Lineup:** It is encouraged in all divisions that *all teams will bat through their player roster.* Players do not have to be in the defensive line-up in order to hold a spot in the batting order (i.e. a substitute player presently on the bench may bat in initial player order). All players must retain the same spot in the batting order no matter if they are presently in the line-up, a substitute, or re-entered for defensive purposes. If a player exits the field and is no longer in the line-up, when that players turn in the batting order is up, their spot is skipped in the order. If the skipped player returns to the field and re-enters the game, they must re-enter in the same spot in the order they were originally placed.

### **Section 4 – 8U Division Only - A strike is called by the Umpire**

- A. (Fast Pitch Only) For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone.  
EFFECT: (8U) The ball is dead (No stealing See Rule 8 – Batter Runner)
- C. (Fast Pitch Only) For each legally pitched ball swung on and missed by the batter.  
EFFECT: (8U) The ball is dead (No stealing See Rule 8 – Batter Runner)
- D. (Fast Pitch Only) For each foul tip.  
EFFECT: (8U) The ball is dead (No stealing See Rule 8 – Batter Runner)

**NOTE** => Strikes are not called in any 6U division game.



**Section 5 – 8U Division Only - A ball is called by the Umpire**

A. (Fast Pitch Only) For each pitched ball outside the strike zone.

EFFECT: (8U) The ball is dead (No stealing See Rule 8 – Batter Runner)

NOTE => Balls are not called in any 6U division game.

**RULE 8. BATTER/RUNNER AND RUNNER.**

**Section 1 – The Batter becomes a Batter-Runner**

B. When the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground...

EXCEPTION: This rule will NOT be applied in 8U and below (8U, 6U)

**Section 2 – Runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out**



EXCEPTION: See H below. 6U - 8U - Runners may only advance when the ball is put in play by the batter.

**H. (10U)**

USA Softball tournament rules pertaining to stealing/runner advancement ***will not be*** adopted for the 10U Division. This to encourage the development of defensive plays without jeopardy on allowing the opposing team to score, as follows:

1. No advancing/stealing from third base. In no case may a runner advance from third or steal home unless a result of a force play (i.e. bases loaded walk or batter hit by pitch, a batted ground ball necessitating runners advance), a tag-up after a fly ball is caught, or as a result of a “live ball” continuing play after a hit ball whereby a runner attempts to score before the play is ruled dead.

For purposes of interpretation of this rule, a ball will be considered “dead” when a catcher is returning a pitched ball back to the pitcher. The runner on third cannot advance from third base on an errant return throw from the catcher back to the pitcher after a pitch or the occurrence of a drop third strike.

A catcher or pitcher can make an attempt to catch a runner off any base without penalty of runner advancing from third and scoring. (e.g. A runner can be tagged OUT if caught off a base by a defensive player, but a runner on third cannot score, on an errant throw or defensive misplay in an attempt to catch a runner off any base)

2. Runners can advance one base on overthrows made by any fielders during a play except during an attempted steal, pickoff play, or drop third strike throw to first. Defensive player can throw without penalty to try and record an out.
3. Drop third strike is in effect. If catcher drops the third strike, called or offered at, the runner can attempt to advance to first base. If first base is occupied for any reason at time of pitch of 3rd strike, batter is called out.

**Sliding** – For safety reasons, head first sliding in Divisions 10U and up ***will be allowed*** except at home plate.

**Section 3 – No team shall advance a batter past first base on a bases on balls (NO**

**Continuation Rule); however, nothing in this rule shall prohibit runners (at any base) from advancing on wild pitches, passed balls, or overthrows from the catcher.**

## **RULE 11 – Scoring**

1. 6U games are not scored

## **RULE 12 – 10U stealing change**

In 10U ONLY, there will be no stealing or advancement of any kind on wild pitches/passed balls by a team after that team is ahead by five runs or more. If the team that is behind by five runs reduces the deficit to four runs or more then the team that is ahead can resume stealing or advancing on wild pitches/passed balls.

## **8U Game Amendments for 2022**

1. All innings are girl pitch
  - a. After 4 balls, coach takes over pitching, the strike count carries over and the ball count reverts to zero. The coach gets up to 3 tosses. If the player does not put the ball in play after 3 pitches, the player will be called out. The at bat cannot end on a foul or tip, so additional pitches may be required. No walks are allowed other than hit by girl pitch.
  - b. Coach remains on field for entire half inning. When not pitching, coach backs up pitcher for catcher over throws thereby speeding up the game. No coaching is permitted from behind the mound.
  - c. Girl pitchers can only pitch 1 of the first two innings and two of the first four innings. 1 pitch constitutes an inning.
2. 9 batter rule is in place during innings 3-5

Clarification and examples:

1. Coach must have foot on rubber during coach pitch – player pitcher will line up even with rubber to the right or left of coach pitching on the pitching circle. Coaches can mutually agree to adjust this rule except during the playoffs. Example: coach moves to the front of the pitching circle.
2. Hit batters – are awarded first base automatically. Coaches can mutually agree to adjust this rule except during the playoffs. Example: If player is hurt, scared or crying they are awarded first base otherwise they continue to hit.
3. Over throws from infielders to any base, other than 1<sup>st</sup> base – runners can advance at own risk. All Runners are limited to 1 base maximum. On overthrows to 1<sup>st</sup>, only runners already occupying a base will be allowed to advance extra base. Batter must stop at 1<sup>st</sup> on overthrow to 1<sup>st</sup> base. Example: 2nd base overthrow to 1st base ... runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base can continue to try and advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. 1st baseman can attempt to throw runner out at 3rd with no chance of the runner moving to on to home plate an overthrow. A runner on first base at the beginning of the play cannot advance past 3rd. Batter cannot advance past 1<sup>st</sup> base on infield play.
4. Intent rule – If a player makes the intent to return the ball to the infield the play is dead at that time. However, runners are at risk, and if the outfielder makes a clean play to force a runner out, or a clean tag is made, the runner will be called out. Umpire will decide where the runner was in relation to the next base. If half way or more the runner will be awarded the next base. Example: ball hit over outfielders head ... once outfielder get the ball and make an attempt to throw the ball the play is dead. If outfielder retrieves the ball and starts to runs the ball to the infield the runner can continue to advance to bases at own risk.
5. Dead ball Rule in the infield. When an attempt to throw the ball back to the pitcher in the pitching circle, or when the play is clearly over and ruled as such by the umpire.
6. Final Batter/3rd out rule: If the final batter makes an out that is less than the 3rd out base runner are allowed to advance. This only applies during the first 2 innings. Example: Final batter comes to the plate ... 1 out and bases loaded. Ball is put into play to second baseman and the batter is thrown out at first. Now there are two outs but that was the last batter. The runner on third that ran home does count because there was only 1 out. If the out at first was the third or greater – the run crossing home wouldn't have counted.
7. Outfields must start each play with their feet on the grass. If playing on turf, outfielders need to be 20 feet behind the base path and bases.
8. Teams should make an attempt to limit the number of coaches on the field during live play.
  - a. On Offense, coaches can pitch and coach first and third base.
  - b. On Defense, if necessary, one coach can back up the catcher to speed up the game and one coach can stand in the outfield grass to help position players in between plays. All other coaches should remain in the dugout.
9. 5 innings – 1 hour 45 minutes drop dead. No new inning after 1 hour and 30 minutes.