



SANDY SPRINGS YOUTH SPORTS
SOFTBALL - MINOR LEAGUE
LOCAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Revised: March 2, 2023

The following are the basic rules needed by the coaches. These rules rely heavily on the USA Softball rules, with some modifications for recreation league play. While many USA rules are contained herein, this should not be construed as a substitute for the USA Rules, which each coach is expected to read and adhere to.

The Minor League is an Instructional League and coaches will, within reason, be allowed to liberally use time outs to discuss rules and strategy with his/her team.

I. GENERAL RULES

1. EQUIPMENT

- a. Minor League will play with an 11" Optical Softball having a COR of 0.47 and a Compression of 375.
- b. Catcher's gear shall be worn by the person playing the catcher's position.
- c. Infielders are required to wear a protective mask at all times when pitching to a batter.
- d. The distance between bases shall be set at 60'. The distance between the Pitcher's Plate and Home Plate shall be 35'.
- e. The Pitcher's Circle is an 8' radius from the back of the rubber.
- f. The Infield Foul Line is a 10' arc from the back edge of home plate that demarcates infield from foul territory.
- g. Bats must conform to the [rules set forward](#) by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

2. DURATION OF GAMES

- a. Regular season games shall be 6 innings in length; however, no new inning shall be started after 75 minutes. Games ending in a tie shall be declared a tie. Upon conclusion of the game the players and coaches should shake hands, or exchange a "fist bump," and say "good game" to the opponent, and vacate the field so that the next scheduled game can begin on time.



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- b. Time Between Half-Innings: The time between the last out and the first pitch in the next half inning should not be greater than 3 minutes. Once the umpire calls "play ball", the catcher and batter have 30 seconds to take their places. The umpire in the event of equipment problems may extend flexibility on these rules.
- c. In order to speed the game, the offensive coach may substitute a base runner for the catcher, who is catching the subsequent inning, with 2 outs. This is to allow catcher to prepare for the next half-inning. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out in that inning.

3. DUGOUTS AND HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Dugouts

- i. Assignments: Home team will occupy the 1st base dugout.
- ii. Cleanup: Teams must remove all equipment and trash from the dugouts immediately following the completion of games.
- iii. Vacate Immediately: Dugouts are to be vacated immediately following any game where another game is scheduled on the same field. Post-game team meetings must be held elsewhere.

b. Team Duties

- i. Electronic Scoreboard: The Visiting Team is responsible for keeping the score on the electronic, physical scoreboard via the SingleScore app.
- ii. Electronic Scoreboxes: The Visiting Team for the last game of the day on each field is responsible for turning off the scoreboard. The power switch is at the scoreboard.
- iii. Scorebook: The home team is responsible for a scorebook or GameChanger
- ii. Game Balls: The Home Team is responsible for supplying one (1) new game ball, and one (1) like-new game ball (use game ball from prior game).

4. NUMBER OF PLAYERS REQUIRED

- a. A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players present at the start of a game. If 8 eligible players are not available by 10 minutes past the official game time or at any time during the game (for any reason including injury), the umpire shall declare the game a forfeit.



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- i. In the event of a forfeit, the teams are encouraged to play a practice game during the scheduled time and, if they do, umpires shall not officiate. However, in no event shall the practice game proceed past 15 minutes preceding the scheduled start time of the next scheduled game.
- b. If a team is playing with less than nine (9) players, an 'out' shall be declared when an "open" position in the line-up is reached. Likewise, when a player leaves the game for any reason, an 'out' shall be declared when that player's place in the batting order is reached. However, enforcement of this rule is at the discretion of the managers, who, prior to the start of play can agree to not enforce this rule.
- c. For the playoffs only, in the case where a team does not have a minimum of 9 players available, Rule 4b will NOT be left to the discretion of the opposing manager. An out MUST be taken in the batting order for any empty slots in the batting order.

5. LINEUPS, LINEUP CARDS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- a. Team Managers shall prepare lineup cards prior to the start of each game. A copy of the lineup card shall be given to the Umpire and Manager of the opposing team.
- b. The Lineup card must list the names and jersey numbers of all players. The sequence designated by the Lineup Card shall also be the Batting Order. All players on team rosters must be listed on the lineup cards including players not starting and absent players
- c. Any late-arriving players shall be entered into the game at the bottom of the existing batting order when they arrive.
- d. Re-entry and Substitution: There shall be free substitution for all players throughout the game.
- e. If more than 11 players are present for a game, then the coach will be required to use substitutes, and the coach must fairly distribute playing time so that no player plays more than one (1) inning more than any other player.
- f. **Call-Up Rule: A Manager concerned about being short-handed for any game may recruit players from Rookies (6U). Teams will have a pool of available Rookies to call-up for a game(s).** The following rules apply to call-up players:
 - i. Call-Up players are subject to all of the same rules as roster players



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- ii. Call-Up players must bat last in the order
- iii. Call-Up players can only play when the team in need has eight (8) or fewer members of their team present. Call-Up players may not play if the team in need has 9 or more players present.
- iv. Call-Up players cannot play the pitcher's or catcher's positions.
- v. Call-Up players are eligible for post season (playoff) games to avoid a forfeit because less than eight players are available. In this case the team with eight or fewer players may use substitute players to field a maximum of nine players.

6. PLAYOFFS – Double Elimination Bracket

- i. Time limit is 80 minutes. Open inning at 60 minutes or after 3rd inning, whichever occurs first.
- ii. If a game in the playoffs is tied at the end of regulation time and less than 6 innings have been played, one full extra inning will be played. Should the game be tied after that inning, a tiebreaker will be played to break the tie per USA Rules. Starting with the first extra inning and for each half inning thereafter the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning placed on second base. The game shall be continued until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made. If time has expired and 6 innings have been completed, then the tiebreaker inning will be the 7th inning.
- iii. Playoff and championship games shortened by weather that would otherwise be considered a complete game during the regular season will be resumed at a later date.

II. OFFENSIVE RULES

1. Offensive Inning: The game will consist of "open" and "closed" innings. An "Open Inning" is the first new inning begun after 55 minutes of play or after 3 innings, whichever occurs first.
2. Run Limits: The number of runs which may be scored in any Closed Inning shall be limited to three (3). The number of runs which may be scored in any Open Inning shall be limited to eight (8).



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3. Mercy Rule: There is a "mercy rule" of an eight-run difference after 5 completed innings.
4. Sliding: Runners have the option to slide at any base at which a play is being made with the exception of 1st base. However, while the runner is not required to slide, runner is not allowed to initiate contact with the fielder. If, in the judgement of the umpire, contact is made when the runner does not attempt to avoid contact, she will be declared out. If the umpire judges that the runner attempted to avoid contact, she will be declared safe. The intention of this rule is to minimize collisions.
5. Courtesy Runner: In addition to the Courtesy Runner allowed for catchers (see Rule I2c) a Courtesy Runner may be requested by a Manager for any base runner who has a doctor's notice requesting that running activity be minimized. The player who made the last recorded out shall be the Courtesy Runner.
6. BASE RUNNERS -
 - a. LEAD OFFS - Base Runners may not leave the base until the ball is put into play by the next batter.
 - b. STEALING BASES - Base Runners may not steal bases in the Minor League.
 - c. ADVANCING ON A BALL PUT IN PLAY - Base Runners may advance an unlimited number of bases at their own peril on any ball put into play by the batter. However, the ball is dead, and the play is over, when it is in control of the pitcher and in the pitcher's possession within the Pitcher's Circle. A runner who is not halfway to the next base when the play is over must return to that last touched base.

III. DEFENSIVE RULES

1. COACH PITCH RULES
 - a. Defensive Pitcher cannot line up in front of Coach Pitcher
 - b. The Coach Pitcher must begin pitching motion with both feet inside the front edge of the pitcher's circle, and is allowed to conclude pitching motion with both feet outside the pitcher's circle.
 - c. The "Coach Pitcher" cannot participate in any defensive play and must use reasonable effort to avoid interfering with defensive team play. If the umpire judges



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that reasonable effort to avoid interference was not given by the "Coach Pitcher", the umpire shall call "interference" with the effect that the batter will be called out and all base runners will return to the bases they occupied at the beginning of the play.

- d. Each batter will receive 3 swinging strikes or 5 pitches to attempt to put the ball in play. If the batter fails to put the ball in play, they will be called out. Batters are not allowed walks on base. The officiating umpire will not call balls and strikes. Players CAN strikeout with 3 unsuccessful swings at a pitched ball. A batter cannot be called out on a 3rd strike foul ball, even if it's the 5th pitch in the series. Additional pitches are given until the batter puts the ball in play, strikes out or fails to swing.

2. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- a. All Players Bat, each team will field a minimum of 8 players.
- b. There will be no more than 6 infield players, including the catcher, all others are to be positioned beyond the outfield line, with the exception of a "short-fielder/rover" that may stand behind 2B. There will be a maximum of 11 defensive players on the field at one time.
- c. No more than 3 players will be on either half of the infield as defined by a line between home and second base.
- d. No player will be positioned closer than the halfway lines between first and third. The catcher will be in foul territory behind home plate.

3. PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS – Players may not play any position for more than 2 innings in the first 4 innings, and every player must play at least one (1) inning in the infield.

4. OVERTHROWS – Any overthrow to first base (foul territory or outfield grass) will be considered a dead ball, and no runner may advance past the base that they were heading to when the throw was attempted. Runners may advance only one (1) base on any overthrow other than first base. An overthrow of the pitcher is defined as a ball thrown to the pitcher to stop the play that hits the ground and goes outside the pitching circle, in the umpire's judgment. Runners may advance only one (1) base. A play may have at most one (1) overthrow.

5. DEFENSIVE COACH IN OUTFIELD – One coach for the defensive team will be allowed in the field of play to help coach and place players. The coach must remain in the outfield (feet on grass) during the pitch and fielding of hits. Coaches cannot touch their players during any pitch or play in progress.