

## 10u HOUSE INTER-LEAGUE RULES

All games will be played according to USA Softball Rules except for free substitution, the batting of all players in order, all players will bat, and any of the below rules that conflict with USA Softball rules.

### 1. Before the Game:

- a. Teams should be ready to play 15 minutes ahead of their scheduled start time.
- b. Coaches and umpires should review the ground rules and out-of-play areas prior to the start of the game.
- c. The home team should supply a new 11-inch hard softball. The visiting team should supply a ball of the same size in good condition.
- d. Teams should exchange batting orders prior to the start of the game. Any player that will depart prior to the completion of the game should be identified at this time if known.
- e. The league owning the field preps and lines the field. If two teams from the same league are playing, the home team preps and lines the field before the game (generally only required for first game of the day at a field) and rakes and removes trash after the game.
- f. Leagues are required to supply a home plate umpire for every game on their fields. Base umpire(s) may also be supplied.
- g. If there is no umpire for a game, the team at bat will provide an umpire for when that team bats. The team on the field will provide a field umpire.

### 2. Game Duration:

- a. No game will go beyond six (6) innings, regardless of the time left.
- b. No new inning will start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from game start; drop dead time is 1 hour and 50 minutes.
- c. If an inning is not completed (for any reason), the score of a called game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat and is winning or has tied the score. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- d. Coaches are expected to keep the game moving quickly. To minimize downtime between innings, catchers should put on their equipment before the last out is recorded. Coaches are encouraged to pull their catcher from a base when there are two outs so she can put on her equipment. The most recent player to make an out will be the substitute runner.
- e. The umpire (or coaches in the case of no umpire) should call the game if:
  - the playing field conditions are too wet or slippery;
  - it is too dark; or
  - lightning is visible within 30 minutes of drop dead time.
- f. A game is official if ending after three (3) complete innings (or 2 ½ if the home team is ahead).
- g. A game may be temporarily delayed if it is raining or if lightning is seen. In the case of lightning, players are to immediately go to cars or shelter with a roof. No game can restart until 30 minutes after lightning is last seen. If a game is delayed, the scheduled end time will not be extended by the amount of the delay.

### 3. Players:

- a. Teams may start and play with six (6) players. If a team has less than 6, then the team with more players may select a few players to play for the other team to play the game at the request of team with fewer players. The team which has fewer than 6 players does not automatically forfeit the game. ***(The point is for the girls to play, not focus on the win-loss.)***
- b. Every available player should bat in a maintained order. Due to limited restroom facilities at the fields, umpires should use their discretion for absent batters and may allow a batter to be skipped without penalty.
- c. Late arriving players shall be placed at the end of the original batting order (e.g., a player arriving after her team has batted around must wait until the last player in the original order bats again for her first at bat).
- d. Teams may play up to 12 defensive players with no more than four (6) infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B, P, and C). Shifts from the standard infield positions are allowed. The outfielders must start each play no closer than the edge of the outfield grass. In the event games are played without a defined outfield grass, the outfielders must start each play no closer than 10' behind the baselines.
- e. No fielder can sit out a second inning until every available player on the team has sat out one.
- f. Any player who must leave the game early will NOT be called out each time she would be at bat. If a batter cannot bat because of injury, she will NOT be called out each time she is up to bat. She can re-enter the game.

### 4. Run Limit:

- a. Maximum four (4) runs per inning for first four (4) innings. For 5<sup>th</sup> and later innings, maximum eight (8) runs per inning.

### 5. Pitching:

- a. Pitchers are limited to two (2) innings of the first four (4) innings and may not pitch two consecutive innings thereafter. However, a pitcher may pitch the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> innings in succession. Any pitch during an inning shall constitute a full inning of pitching (e.g., a pitcher who faces one batter in an inning has pitched one inning). However, a pitcher may pitch, be replaced, and return the same inning and have that count as one inning of pitching.
- b. The pitching plate shall be located 35' from the back tip of home plate.
- c. Face masks are required for all pitchers and recommended for fielders (the catcher is required to wear a NOCSAE-approved facemask along with the rest of her catching gear.)
- d. No walks are allowed. Ball four (4) does not entitle the batter to first base, but will result in the coach pitching to their own batters. The coach should not come onto the field until the umpire indicates to do so. When the coach comes out to pitch to a batter, the batter will retain the number of strikes she had when ball four (4) was thrown. The coach will pitch up to four (4) pitches to her until:
  - the batter strikes out swinging based on count,
  - the batter strikes out on a called 3<sup>rd</sup> strike, or
  - the batter puts the ball in play.

- e. The home plate umpire is to call balls and strikes on all pitches by either the player or the coach in order to teach the batter the strike zone.
- f. *Coach Pitch Interference*: The coach pitcher must pitch from within the circle throughout the pitch (beginning to end). The coach pitcher must not interfere with a hit ball or a defensive player attempting to make a play on a hit or thrown ball. If interference occurs, a dead ball will be declared. All runners must stop and return to the base they occupied just before the interference occurred. The batter will return to the plate with the count prior to the previous pitch.
- g. *Defensive Pitcher*: When the coach pitcher is pitching, the defensive pitcher must have one foot in the circle and be no closer to home plate than the pitching rubber.
- h. *Hit by Pitch (HBP)*: If the pitch hits the batter, then the batter is awarded first base. Batters should try to get out of the way of a pitched ball, but the base is awarded automatically. If the batter is hit by the pitch while swinging and missing, it is considered HBP and first base is awarded. There is no HBP when coach is pitching. Batters hit by the pitch can elect to continue batting. In this case, the pitch hitting the batter is called a ball even if the batter swing and misses.
- i. The batter is automatically out on the third strike. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
- j. A pitcher gets five (5) warm-ups to start the game or when entering in relief; for successive innings, she gets three (3).
- k. While all teams should strive to have at least two pitchers, there may be situations where a second pitcher is not available. In this case, there are two options: 1) the team at bat may supply a pitcher from their own team if the other coach agrees; 2) the coach of the team at bat will pitch the entire count. So as to not to penalize the team at bat, until there are four balls, base runners are allowed to steal 3<sup>rd</sup> and home as per the rule in the stealing section. If a coach throws four (4) balls, then the normal coach pitching rules apply – no stealing and no bunting. The defensive team should position a player in the circle as is normally done when a coach pitches for the entire time the coach is pitching.
- l. A coach may make two visits to the mound during any inning without replacing the pitcher. On the third visit, the pitcher must be replaced by a different player. The pitcher who was replaced on the third visit may not return to pitch during that inning.

## 6. Batting:

- a. Bunting is allowed. Some reminders:
  - Any missed attempt to bunt is a strike.
  - Batter is out on all failed (to include foul balls) bunt attempts when she has two (2) strikes.
  - Players may not bunt during coach pitch.
- b. *Batter's Interference*: The batter must get out of the way if there is a defensive play at the plate. If the batter does not get out of the way and, in the umpire's judgment the batter interfered with the defensive team's attempt to put out a runner, the batter is out and all runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. This rule does not apply when a batter interferes with the catcher's throw to the pitcher. In this situation, the ball is dead and no runner may advance.
- c. The first thrown bat by either team will result in a warning to both teams; the second thrown bat by any player will result in the player being called out.

- d. Double Wall and 100% composite bats are not permitted. Aluminum bats and hybrid bats (composite handle but not composite barrel) are acceptable as they long as on the USA Softball approved list.

## 7. Fielding:

- a. Play ends when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle to end play. At this point, base runners not on a base must immediately (after 1 second) move to either the base in front of them or the base they have just touched.
  - The pitcher can make a play on any base runner off the base, but if she does, other base runners may advance at risk of being put out.
  - Any base runner that does not immediately move to a base shall be called out.
  - Once on base, a runner cannot advance on the throwback to the pitcher. HOWEVER, if the throw results in the ball going outside the pitching circle, then the ball is live and the runner can advance at her own risk. The ball must be outside the circle for the circle to advance. If the ball is dropped and remains inside the circle, the runner cannot advance. The umpire has the discretion to decide if a throw is intended for the pitcher.
- b. The *Infield Fly Rule* does not apply (i.e., the results of the play are based on what fielders and runners actually do). This means runners must return to their original base if the pop fly is caught and can be doubled up if they do not; they can advance if they tag up.

## 8. Stealing:

- a. Base runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- b. The penalty for leaving the base early will be for all base runners to return to the base after the play has ended. However, if the runner was thrown out on the play, the play stands and all runners remain on their current base.
- c. ***Stealing will be limited to one base per batter.***
- d. If the base runner gets thrown out attempting to advance to another base, she is out.
- e. There is no stealing when the coach is pitching with the exception of when a coach is pitching the entire at bat.
- f. After leaving third base on the release by the pitcher, a runner may steal home only on a passed ball before the ball is in the pitcher's control in the pitcher's circle. A "passed ball" is defined as any pitch not caught cleanly by the catcher.

These rules are intended for regular season interleague play. Leagues may play by a different set of rules when playing within their own league. If a post-season interleague tournament is played, there may be adjustments to these rules, notably regarding time-limits, completing an inning, and how to resolve ties after regulation play.