

Rookie (7U) Softball Rules

The Field

- Bases will be at 50 feet.
- The pitching rubber for players fielding in the pitcher's position will be at 30 feet. *Players do not pitch.*

Game Ball

- Players will use an 11" soft/trainer ball.

Player Equipment

- All players must be in full uniform (jersey and pants) to participate.
- Hanging jewelry (earrings, necklaces, etc.) is not allowed.
- All batters, on-deck batters, and base runners are required to wear protective batting helmets at all times. Face cages on batting helmets are strongly encouraged.

Roster Management

- Games should begin as soon as each team has a minimum of 6 players. Late arriving players may assume defensive positions freely at the next available stoppage of play and should be added to the end of the batting lineup.
- In the event that one team cannot field the minimum number of players within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the team may borrow players from the same or a lower division (Tee Ball) to participate in the contest. Players may also be borrowed from the opposing team to play defensively in the field only (borrowed players must be subbed out when it is their regular turn in their team's batting order).
- There are no forfeits in the Rookie division and coaches should make every attempt to allow the children who do attend the game to play.
- **All players must appear in the field defensively:** 4 at the traditional infield positions, 1 at the pitcher's rubber (behind and either to the right or the left of the coach), and the rest evenly spaced across the outfield. There is no player catcher.
- All infielders must be positioned on the infield dirt at a minimum of 3 feet behind the infield grass. Outfielders must be positioned a minimum of 3 feet behind the infield and may not crowd onto the dirt.
- Teams may make unlimited positional switches during a game.
- **Every child should bat (universal batting order).**

Adults on the Field

- Parent/adult participation will be at each coach's discretion and adhere to the following limits:
 - **Batting (no more than 5):** One adult will pitch to his or her own team, one should catch, one should coach at first base and another at third base, and one should remain in the dugout.
 - **Fielding (no more than 2):** One coach is permitted behind shortstop and another behind second base.

- **No more than 2 coaches may be in the dugout at any time.** Additional adult volunteers should return to the spectator area when not assisting on the field.

Gameplay

- **There is no umpire for Rookie games.** Coaches should assume joint responsibility for making any judgment calls.
- Games will be 5 innings or 1 ½ hours, whichever comes first. An inning may not begin less than 15 minutes before the next scheduled game time or before the time limit.
- Coaches should use their best discretion to determine whether to proceed in the event of darkness or inclement weather. **Player safety, not getting a complete game in, should always be the priority.**
- There is a run limit of 5 per inning except for the final (5th) inning.
- Mercy rule: if a team is ahead by 15 runs or more after both teams have batted 4 times, the game will end.
- There is no infield fly rule.

Pitching

- Coaches or other team adults pitch to their own teams from a reasonable distance (minimum 20 feet, maximum 30 feet).
- Pitching should be *underhand* with a reasonable arc.

Batting

- There are no called balls or strikes and no walks.
- **A player shall bat until she hits the ball in play or completes seven (7) swings.** Additional swings are allowed if the seventh results in a foul tip. After seven swings and misses, the batter will be declared out.
- A player inadvertently hit by a pitched ball should continue to bat. (Note: coaches should begin to teach the proper way to avoid inside pitches by turning toward the catcher.)
- Throwing the bat is prohibited. A first offense will result in a warning; the batter will be called out for any subsequent offenses.
- Bunting is not allowed.

Base Running

- Runners may not advance on overthrows to first base.
- On a batted ball into the outfield, the runner may advance as many bases as possible until the ball is retrieved and thrown into the infield dirt. If the runner is more than halfway to the next base at that time, she may continue to that base and must stop there; if the runner is less than halfway to the next base when the ball reaches the infield, she must return to the previously touched base.
- Coaches may not assist or touch baserunners in any way, including holding them to stop them from advancing.
- Leading and stealing are not allowed.

Sportsmanship

- Players should take a moment after the conclusion of the game to acknowledge the other team, either with a traditional handshake line, fist bumps, or waves, as player safety protocols dictate.

Ground Rules

- Smoking is prohibited on the field and in the spectator area.
- Pets are prohibited from ICYP grounds.
- Adults should be conscious of setting a good example for the players at all times, and arguing between coaches or parents will not be tolerated. **In lieu of an umpire, coaches should report to the league office any individual whose behavior is considered abusive.**

For safety reasons, players and spectators should walk around the perimeter of the field when arriving/departing and should remain alert for batted and thrown balls on adjacent fields.

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