

MAJOR LEAGUE (U-12) SOFTBALL RULES FOR 2009

All players must wear rubber-cleated baseball shoes or tennis shoes – no metal cleats.

Players are welcome to use their own batting helmets, however, the helmet MUST have a facemask.

Bats must be 2 ¼ inch in diameter.

There are 9 players in the defensive field; 6 in the infield and 3 in the outfield. Outfielders must play on the grass until the ball is hit.

You must have 7 players present to start the game. Fewer than 7 players present at the beginning of the game will result in a forfeit. Players that arrive late may bat but must be added to the end of the batting order.

The team batting is allowed both a first base coach and a third base coach. Any other offensive coach or parent helper must remain in the dugout or at the mouth of the dugout.

A game is considered complete if one of two criteria are met; the first, 6 completed innings with one team having more runs than the other. The second, reaching the 90 minutes time length. For games that reach the time length, please observe the following rule; through May, a new inning (visiting team at bat) will not start after 75 minutes from the start of the game. This will be extended to 80 minutes beginning June 1st. Please have the umpire note the start time of the game and game length is determined by the umpires watch. A game is complete at 90 minutes, regardless of home team at bat or score. Tie games are allowed.

If a game is tied after 6 complete innings, and the game has yet to reach the 75/80 minute mark, a seventh inning can be started, however, each team will begin its at bat with a runner on 2nd base. The baserunner must be the girl that recorded the final out of the previous inning.

We allow one minute between innings.

There is a 6 run limit per inning at bat.

Wild pitches and pass balls are live balls at the U-12 level and baserunners can advance. See next section.

Base stealing is allowed at the U-12 level. Stealing of 2nd and 3rd base will be allowed all season. Stealing of home plate will be allowed starting with each team's 9th game (starting Thursday, May 21st). If a pre 5/21 game is played after 5/21 (due to rainout or reschedule), it is to be played according to pre-5/21 rules.

Batters are entitled to an unlimited number of foul balls. A batter with zero or one strike will NOT be considered out in the event of a "tick" ball that is subsequently caught by the catcher, unless the tick ball foul rises over the batters head. A batter with 2 strikes WILL be considered out in the event of a tick ball that is subsequently caught by the catcher regardless of how high the tick ball rises.

Foul balls that first strike the protective fencing are considered dead even if they are subsequently caught by a defensive player.

Bunting is allowed at the U-12 level.

The batter is allowed to step over home plate to avoid an errant pitch or a pitch thrown behind them.

Catchers must maintain ample distance from the batter both in the interest of safety and so as to avoid interference with the batter's swing. If a catcher does interfere with the batter's swing, the batter will be awarded 1st base.

Similarly, hitters must not interfere with a catcher attempting to field a foul ball, a bunt ball, a wild pitch or pass ball as she attempts to throw out a runner stealing.

Hitters and baserunners are allowed to advance on an overthrow, however, prior to May 21st, a baserunner may not advance to home unless the initial impetus of the play was a ball hit in to the field of play.

Baserunners are allowed to leave the base (a courtesy step) when the pitch crosses home plate. Baserunners that leave the base early will be called out.

Batters must use the orange "safety" base when there is a play or potential play at 1st base.

The infield fly rule **IS** in effect at the U-12 level. Here is the rule and **BOTH** criteria must be met:

The ump will call a batter out under the infield fly rule when a fly ball is hit in the infield and he has a reasonable expectation that the ball will be caught, when:

1. There are less than two outs, and
2. There is some type of force play possible at 3rd (bases loaded or runners on 1st and 2nd).

The infield fly rule does not apply to line drive hits or bunts that are popped up. So, if a third baseman approaches the plate to protect against the bunt and the batter hits a fly ball over the 3rd baseman's head, the infield fly rule should not apply, because the ump cannot have a reasonable expectation that the ball could be caught.

If the infield fly rule is applied, the ump should yell "infield fly – batter is out", and the play is essentially dead. All baserunners must be allowed to return safely to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch, even if the ball is not caught.

Baserunners are NOT required to slide into a base on close plays. Be aware however, that players that initiate a collision (i.e. contact more severe than normal "bumping") by choosing not to slide will be called out. Please teach the technique.

There is to be no head first sliding.

Defensive players may not obstruct the base paths unless they have the ball in their possession.

When batting, please substitute a pinch runner for the projected catcher once you reach 2 outs. The pinch runner must be the player that recorded the last out. The projected catcher should use this time to get catchers gear on.

An infield ball will be allowed for the first inning only.

In the event of a fair ball being hit and bouncing into an area that is out of play, or ball thrown into an area that is out of play (such as a dugout), the baserunners will be given the base to which they were running at the time plus one additional base.

PITCHING RULES:

Pitchers are to pitch from a distance of 40 feet (the front rubber).

Pitchers are to start their windup with both feet on the rubber. They are NOT allowed to take a backstep on their windup, although they may "rock" their shoulders back. Pitchers are not allowed to jump or leap forward as they deliver the ball – their back foot (rubber foot) must remain on the ground (dragged) until the ball has left their hand.

At the U-12 level, no pitcher will pitch more than three innings in a game. The three innings do NOT need to be consecutive.

One pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched – there will be NO inning divisions by 3.

A pitcher that hits two batters in an inning must be replaced for the remainder of that inning. She is free to pitch again in the game so long as doing so does not exceed the 3 innings/game cap.

A new pitcher gets a maximum 4 pitch warm up.

A pitch that hits the ground is considered a live ball so long as it does not then hit the batter. If it does not hit the batter, baserunners can advance (with the sole exception of advancing to home prior to May 21st).

A pitch that hits the ground and then hits the batter is considered a dead ball and WILL result in an HBP (hit by pitch) at the U-12 level. The batter will be awarded 1st base. No other baserunners can advance unless forced to do so by the HBP.

There is no attempting to reach 1st on a dropped third strike at the U-12 level.

Intentional walks ARE allowed. It is NOT necessary to throw the 4 pitchouts – simply tell the ump and opposing coach that you want to put the hitter on.

Pitchers are expected to work at a brisk pace.

GENERAL:

Home team will provide 2 game balls.

Visiting team of the 5:00PM is responsible for unlocking the equipment bin (combo = 5454) and setting the bases on their diamond.

Each team is responsible for cleaning out the dugouts.

Home team of the 6:30PM game is responsible for raking the field, putting away bases, replacing the base post caps, locking the equipment bin and locking up the batting cages. This has to be done.

Visiting team of each game is responsible for reporting the score both to me (via email) and on the league website in a timely manner (i.e. no later than the following day). I will provide instructions on how to update the league website.

Any minor that is serving as a base coach, batboy or batgirl must wear a helmet while they are on the field.

There is to be no swinging of a bat by any player other than the hitter, and this applies to both sides of the fence. Hitters that are "on deck" or "in the hole" are not allowed to take warm up cuts. The hitter can take warm-up swings on her way up to the plate or outside of the batter's box – NO EXCEPTIONS.