

# MAJOR LEAGUE (U-12) SOFTBALL RULES FOR 2010

(Revised 4/28/2010)

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

Players are welcome to use their own batting helmet, 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.

We allow one minute between innings.

There is a 5 run limit per inning at bat.

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

Base stealing is allowed at the U-12 level. Stealing of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base will be allowed all season. Stealing of home plate will be allowed starting with each team's 9<sup>th</sup> game (starting Wednesday, June 2nd). If a pre 6/02 game is played after 6/02 (due to rainout or reschedule), it is to be played according to pre-6/02 rules. Also, prior to 6/02/10, a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base may **NOT** steal home when the opposing team's catcher attempts to throw out a runner stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

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.

Any batter that is struck by a pitch must take 1<sup>st</sup> base.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. Deliberate interference will be left to the umpire's discretion.

Hitters and base runners are allowed to advance on an overthrow, however, prior to June 2nd, a base runner may not advance to home unless the initial impetus of the play was a ball hit in to the field of play.

Base runners are allowed to leave the base (a courtesy step) when the pitch crosses home plate. Base runners 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> (bases loaded or runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>).

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 base runners must be allowed to return safely to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch, even if the ball is not caught.

Base runners 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, although, a base runner may dive back head first to return to a base.

Defensive players may not obstruct the base paths unless they have the ball in their possession, or are in the process of fielding a ball.

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 must 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 base runners will be given the base to which they were running at the time plus one additional base.

The "**CIRCLE RULE**" is in effect. If the pitcher has the ball and is standing within a 4 foot radius of the pitching rubber, any base runner that has rounded a base and then stops must make a definitive move toward one base or the other. A base runner is not allowed "dance" in between two bases in an attempt to bait the pitcher into throwing to one base, as long as the pitcher has the ball and is within 4 feet of the pitching rubber. In other words, the next move of any base runner that has stopped between two bases must be to either return to the preceding base or advance to the next base, as long as the pitcher has the ball and is standing within 4 feet of the pitching rubber. Any base runner that violates the circle rule will be called out.

### PITCHING RULES:

Pitchers are to pitch from a distance of 43 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, base runners can advance (with the sole exception of advancing to home prior to June 2nd).

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 1<sup>st</sup> base. No other base runners can advance unless forced to do so by the HBP.

There is no attempting to reach 1<sup>st</sup> 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, one new and one used.

Visiting team of the 4:55PM is responsible for unlocking the equipment bin 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.

## 2010 Game Length Rules for U10/U12 Softball

Games are to start 4:55PM and 6:30PM. Umpires and coaches must note the official start time of the game. It is very important that the 6:30PM game is allowed to start on time (this is a priority!!!). The same rules apply to both games, meaning, the teams in the 6:30PM games cannot bend the rules simply because there is no game following their game.

Teams in the games starting at 4:55PM must vacate the dugouts quickly upon completion of their game.

Teams are allowed the following runs/inning caps: **5 runs/inning for U12**, and **4 runs/inning for U10**.

Teams are allowed 1 minute between innings – catchers must be ready to go. Pitchers are expected to work a rapid pace.

A game is complete if 6 innings have been played and one team has more runs than the other team.

For games that are **less than 6 innings**:

The 75 minute rule is in effect for all games, meaning, no new inning (top half) is to start once the game has reached 75 minutes. If after 75 minutes, the game is tied and the home team has finished their at-bat, the game is a tie (for regular season games). This will be amended for our in-house tournaments.

If a game has not reached 75 minutes, a new inning may start as long as the batter and defense are ready, and the first pitch of the new inning is thrown before the 75<sup>th</sup> minute starts.

If the top half of a new inning is started before 75 minutes, the home team must be allowed to have their final at-bat. Both teams must work at a brisk pace to ensure that both teams get their full at-bat and that the 6:30PM game can start on time.

Catchers must be ready to go in advance,  
Return throw to pitcher from catcher must be accurate,  
Minimal intervals between pitches,  
Hitters run up to the batter's box,  
Hitter's should remain in batter's box between pitches,

A new inning (top half) should not start near the 75<sup>th</sup> minute if either team is ahead by more than the run cap for their league allows.

For games **tied after 6 innings**, but **less than 75 minutes**:

If after 6 completed innings a game is tied and still under the 75 minute mark, extra innings may be played to break the tie, **up until the 75 minute rule applies**. The extra inning(s) will have the following stipulations:

- Each team will begin its at-bat with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The runner should be the player that **immediately precedes** the batter in the batting order.
- There will be a 2 runs/inning cap.
- If the game is still tied and the 75 minute rule has been met, the game is a tie (except in tournament play).