

# MINOR LEAGUE (U-10) 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 helmets, however, the helmet MUST have a facemask.

Bats must be 2 ¼ inch in diameter.

There are 10 players in the defensive field; 6 in the infield and 4 in the outfield. Outfielders must play on the grass until the ball is hit.

You must have 8 players present to start the game. Fewer than 8 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, unless he/she is coming out to pitch.

The defensive team will post a coach at the backstop behind the catcher and umpire to assist with wild pitches. The coach behind home plate is to remain silent so as not distract the pitcher, catcher or batter. You are there solely to help expedite the flow of the game. If desired, the defensive team is allowed to have ONE coach in the outfield to assist the defense. The defensive coach in the field MUST stand BEHIND the outfielders.

We allow one minute between innings.

There is a 4 run limit per inning at bat at the U10 level.

There is no base stealing at the U-10 level. Runners may NOT advance on wild pitches or pass balls.

Batters are entitled to an unlimited number of foul balls. A batter with zero or one strike will NOT be called "out" in the event of a "tick" foul ball that is subsequently caught by the catcher, unless the foul ball rises over the batter's head. A batter with 2 strikes WILL be called "out" on any 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 NOT allowed at the U-10 level in league games, however, we would like you to teach the technique.

A batter is allowed to step into and over home plate to avoid a wild pitch or a pitch thrown behind them.

Catchers must maintain ample separation from the batter both in the interest of safety and so as to avoid interfering 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, batters must get out of the way of a catcher attempting to field a foul ball.

Any batter that is struck by a pitch (provided the pitch did not first hit the ground) must take 1<sup>st</sup> base.

Hitters and base runners are allowed to advance one base on an overthrow, however, a base runner may not advance from 2<sup>nd</sup> base to home on an overthrow. Runs can only score on balls that are hit in to the field of play.

Base runners are allowed to leave the base (a courtesy step) when the pitch crosses home plate, and must return to the base unless the ball is hit. 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 NOT in effect at the U-10 level.

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 will be no head first sliding, however, a base runner may dive 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 hit ball. Base runners may go around a fielder in the base path.

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.

### PITCHING RULES:

Pitchers are to pitch from a distance of 43 feet.

Pitchers are to start their windup with both feet on the rubber. They are NOT allowed to take a backstep in 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-10 level, no pitcher will pitch more than two innings in a game. The two 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 2 innings/game cap.

A new pitcher gets a maximum 4 pitch warm up.

A pitch that hits the ground is considered a dead ball.

A pitch that hits the ground and then hits the batter will NOT result in an HBP (hit by pitch) at the U-10 level. The batter does NOT get to go to 1<sup>st</sup> base.

Once the pitch count reaches ball four, an offensive coach will pitch to the hitter. The strike count remains intact. All balls pitched by the coach will be called by the umpire.

Coaches MUST pitch from the rubber.

While the coach is pitching, the defensive team's pitcher is to stand on one side of the coach pitching or the other, and within 3 feet of the rubber.

There is no attempting to reach first on a dropped third strike at the U-10 level.

Pitchers are expected to work at a brisk pace.

### GENERAL:

Home team will provide 2 game balls, one new and one used that is in good condition.

Visiting team of the 4:55PM is responsible for unlocking the equipment bin and setting up the bases on their diamond.

Each team is responsible for cleaning out its own dugout.

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 all areas (both inside and outside 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 before she steps into 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).