



## **2018 DYA Softball Rules Minors, Majors and Seniors**

**Updated: May 1, 2018**

**NOTE: An update for the Seniors League Rules will be published prior to games starting in that League.**

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# 1 Program

## 1.1 League Definitions

1.1.1 These leagues are designed for girls interested in playing recreational softball. The different leagues are designated below.

**Minors** - This league is for girls in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Majors** - This league is for girls in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Seniors** - This league is for girls in the 7<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

1.1.2 Except under the most extraordinary circumstances no students in grades higher or lower than the eligibility for the respective league will play in that league. Exceptions must be approved by the League Commissioner.

1.1.3 Except in a call up situation (see Rule 3.4), players will only be allowed to “play-up” if a parent is either the Head Coach or the named Assistant Coach. Exceptions to grades must be approved by the League Commissioner.

## 1.2 Uniforms

1.2.1 Visors and socks are included in the fee paid to DYA. A grey and green jersey set is required for participation in games. For home games, players wear the green jersey and for away games, players wear the gray jersey. Players will provide white, black, or gray softball pants (color to be determined by the team). Players are to wear their uniforms when playing in any game. Shoes with metal cleats are NOT allowed in any league.

## 1.3 League Play

1.3.1 **Minors, Majors, & Seniors** are competitive leagues. Coaches are not permitted in the field of play during an inning as is allowed at the **Coach Pitch** level, unless they are entering as a **Minors**’ coach-pitcher as described below in Rule 5.3.7.

1.3.2 League play will conclude with a post-season tournament. Tournament winners (1st & 2nd place) will be awarded trophies.

1.3.3 Games will typically be scheduled Monday through Saturday.

1.3.4 Tournament games and rainout games may be scheduled on Sundays, if necessary.

1.3.5 Paid umpires are provided and are paid by the Home Team during the regular season.

## 1.4 Player Team Assignments / League Drafts

1.4.1 **Minors, Majors & Seniors**: All players are assigned by draft each season.

## 1.5 Rules Basis

1.5.1 The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Softball Rules, which are based on the National Federation of High School Rules (NFHS), are the basis for the DYA Softball rules; however, rules within this rule book supersede the OHSAA rules.

## 2 Game Procedures

### 2.1 Game Schedule

2.1.1 Games must be played at the scheduled dates and times, unless approved by the League Commissioner.

### 2.2 Game Start - Minimum Number of Players

*NOTE – Forfeit does NOT mean a game is not played; rather, it only refers to the outcome (win or loss) of the game.*

2.2.1 ALL teams must field eight (8) defensive players to start a game. Games may be delayed up to 15 minutes, but the end time remains the same, 1 hour 45 minutes, from the scheduled start time. If delayed, the game will begin the instant the eighth player arrives.

2.2.2 Teams with fewer than 8 players after a 15-minute delay must forfeit the outcome of the game; however, a game will be played as described below. There will be no forfeits resulting in a game not being played.

a. **Minors & Majors:** If a team has fewer than 8 players show up for the game, they may borrow players from the opposing team for defense. If both teams are lacking players, coaches may divide up the available players fairly to field two teams.

b. **Seniors:** Teams may play with 6 players and borrow up to 3 defensive players from the opposing team (may be different players each defensive inning to minimize interrupting the batting order of the team lending players). If a team has 5 or fewer players, a game is still played with the coaches evenly distributing talent - the shorthanded team records a loss for the game. If both teams are lacking players, coaches may divide up the available players fairly to field two teams.

2.2.3 If a team loses a player or players during a game due to injury or other reasons, reducing their roster to less than 8 players, they may borrow players from the opposing team for defense. The outcome of the game will count in the standings (Seniors only; standings are not kept in Minors and Majors) and in tournament play (all leagues).

### 2.3 Game Duration

2.3.1 A game will consist of seven (7) innings or 1 hour and 45 minutes from the scheduled starting time (regardless of when the game actually started), whichever comes first.

2.3.2 The Umpire is the official time keeper, unless the umpire does not have a time keeping device. If this occurs, the Home Team's head coach will be the time keeper.

2.3.3 The start of an inning is the time when the last out was recorded in the bottom of the previous inning. For example, if the last out of an inning is made at 1 hour, 44 minutes, 59 seconds after the scheduled start time, the next inning is to be played even though the batter will not come to the plate until after the 1 hour and 45 minute time limit.

2.3.4 **Tournament Time Limit:** the Program Director will determine if a modified time limit will be used during the tournament, such as a drop dead time (game ends, regardless of the situation) after 2:30, with the score based on the last fully completed inning.

### 2.4 Complete Games

2.4.1 Games will be considered complete when the time limit has been reached as described in Rule 2.3 or seven (7) complete innings have been played (6½ innings if the home team is winning).

2.4.2 If the time limit has not been reached, a full 7 innings has not been played due the home team winning after 6½ innings, AND both head coaches agree, the bottom half of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning may be played up until the 1:45 time limit is reached, which is considered a drop dead time in this situation. Umpires are to continue to working the game in this situation, unless they have another scheduled game immediately afterwards (umpiring or playing).

2.4.3 **No Mercy Rule:** There is no mercy rule in any softball league. However, if at any time after five full innings have been played, the score is such that one team cannot win AND both Head Coaches agree, the game may be considered complete. Otherwise, games will be seven (7) innings, unless limited by time.

## 2.5 Rainouts and Makeups

2.5.1 Games suspended by weather are considered complete if 4 innings have been played (3½ if the home team is winning). If fewer than that has been played, during the regular season the game will be considered “rained out.”

2.5.2 During the tournament the game will be rescheduled and will start where the rained out game was suspended.

2.5.3 Makeups, if any, of rained out games will be rescheduled as soon as possible at the direction of the League Commissioner. The Commissioner’s decision is final as to game date, time and location.

## 2.6 Ties

2.6.1 During the regular season if the game is tied after 7 innings, it shall be scored a tie. Extra innings are not played during the regular season, even if the time limit has not been reached.

2.6.2 Extra innings will be used to break ties during tournament play.

## 2.7 Pre-Game Warmups

2.7.1 There will be NO batting practice on the field of play fifteen (15) minutes prior to the game's scheduled starting time. Furthermore, there will be NO soft-toss or pepper permitted at any time. Soft-toss is hitting the ball into any fence or net as a batting practice alternative. Pepper is hitting/bunting a soft pitched ball back to the pitcher, usually outside the field of play. Both are dangerous to players and fans and soft-toss is destructive to the facilities.

2.7.2 Violations of the no-soft-toss or pepper rule can subject the coach to disciplinary action by the Program Director.

2.7.3 Each team shall have 7 minutes of infield warm-ups prior to the start of each game. Home team shall have infield warm-ups first. All infield warm-ups will be completed by one (1) minute before scheduled starting time.

2.7.4 Infield warm-ups will be shortened or eliminated in order to keep game start times on schedule. This is particularly important on Saturdays and evenings when more than one game is scheduled on the field. Game start times are to be kept on time.

## 2.8 In-Game Warmups (between inning halves)

2.8.1 Games are to be kept moving along. One (1) minute between inning halves is an acceptable limit.

2.8.2 Coaches should have players ready to take to the field, etc. immediately after the half inning ends. Batters should be ready to take their at bat as soon as the pitcher finishes their warmup.

2.8.3 Infield/outfield warmups are permitted between innings as long as it does not delay the game AND must only be used while the pitcher is taking their warmup pitches. Umpires can take away this privilege if it is abused and causes delays.

2.8.4 Pitching Warmups:

- a. Pitchers will be allowed 3 warmup pitches on the field.
- b. If the catcher is not ready to warm up the pitcher at the start of an inning, an adult should take the place of the catcher.
- c. All youth catchers who warm up a pitcher MUST wear a mask.

**2.9 Coaches, Players and Fan Expectations**

- 2.9.1 Players are to remain on the bench unless involved in play. In play includes warming up, on deck, or other legitimate direction from the coaches.
- 2.9.2 Players, coaches, and scorekeepers are the only persons allowed to be on the team bench after the umpire starts the game.
- 2.9.3 Coaches, other than base coaches and scorekeepers on the team bench are required to remain in the dugouts behind the fenced areas. Coaches are not to position themselves in the field of play in front of the dugout fence.
- 2.9.4 Fans are required to remain well back of the playing field.
- 2.9.5 Players, coaches and fans are not permitted behind the backstop and must move if requested to do so by a coach or umpire.
- 2.9.6 Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches are expected to exercise influence over the fans. Games can be terminated for fan unruliness; but this is an extreme measure and is to be avoided except under the most extreme circumstances.
- 2.9.7 Players, coaches, or spectators may NOT harass the batter, base runners, pitcher, or fielders.
- 2.9.8 Players, coaches and fans may encourage pitchers or batters, but not to the point of influencing calls made by the umpire or swings taken by the batter (e.g., shouting “good pitch” before the ball has crossed home plate and the call has been made by the umpire is not permitted).
- 2.9.9 Game termination is at the sole discretion of the umpire(s).

**2.10 Injuries**

- 2.10.1 The player’s health comes first.
- 2.10.2 If a player is hurt, the game will be stopped at the appropriate time (typically when the play is over).
- 2.10.3 Concern for the player is the responsibility of all coaches.
- 2.10.4 The injured player will sit out that half of the inning in which the player was injured.

**2.11 Field Setup and Cleanup**

- 2.11.1 If necessary, HOME TEAM WILL SET UP THE FIELD, such as laying out the bases and ensuring the pitcher’s plate (rubber) is at the proper distance from home plate.

League	Pitching Distance from Home Plate	Base Length	Ball Used
Minors	35 feet	60 feet	11” ball
Majors	38 feet	60 feet	12” ball
Seniors	43 feet	60 feet	12” ball

- 2.11.2 Both teams are required to clean up their respective areas, picking up paper and disposing in trash barrels.
- 2.11.3 After the last game of the day, the VISITING TEAM WILL TAKE UP THE BASES and put them in the dugout or on the bench.

## 2.12 Umpire Calls and Conferences

- 2.12.1 NO HEAD COACH OR ASSISTANT COACH CAN QUESTION AN UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT CALL.
- Only Head Coaches may question the umpires and only regarding the RULES.
  - Coaches are to approach the umpire, not yell from the benches.
- 2.12.2 A Head Coach may request for a conference with the umpire(s):
- The request can be ONLY to discuss a RULE.
  - Both teams' head coaches and the umpire(s) must be involved in the conference (Assistant Coaches, Base Coaches, Players or Fans are NOT ALLOWED to participate in the conference).
  - Time limit for such a conference is three (3) minutes.
  - The umpire(s) decision is final.
- 2.12.3 No player or fan is allowed to question or argue with an umpire's call, regardless if it is a judgment call or an interpretation of the rules.

## 2.13 Umpire Buddies

- 2.13.1 An umpire buddy is a volunteer parent or parents from each team who will help the coach control unruly fans. They are to remind the fans who the league is for. Umpire calls will be final whether the coaches agree or not. The "Buddy" is to be available to eliminate unnecessary arguing.

## 2.14 Official Scorer

- 2.14.1 The home team will provide the official scorer for each game and each team's scorekeeper should verify the score between innings. Both head coaches must agree on the final score before leaving the field.

## 2.15 Reporting Scores

- 2.15.1 **Seniors** (Only): After each game, both coaches are responsible for reporting the final score to the League Commissioner.

# 3 Participation Rules

## 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 All players are to be treated fairly with respect to other players.
- 3.1.2 Coaches' failure to comply with the Participation Rules will place the coach's action up for review by the Program Director and may subject the team to forfeiture of a win or subject the coach to disciplinary action.
- 3.1.3 Players arriving after the 13<sup>th</sup> out (1<sup>st</sup> out of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning) of the game need not be played, but may be at the discretion of the head coach. Said late player is added to the bottom of the batting order, if played.
- 3.1.4 If a player is a discipline problem, the amount of playing time on defense will be at the coach's discretion. The coach is to inform the player and player's parent(s) why the player will not play the number of innings described below. ***Before the game, the coach is also to inform the opposing coach of any player who will not be playing the number of innings described above.***

**3.2 Batting Order**

- 3.2.1 All players listed on the roster shall be included in the batting order (if at the game).
- 3.2.2 Every team member will be in the batting order even if that team member was not in the field the prior ½ inning.
- 3.2.3 There will be no designated hitter.
- 3.2.4 Players arriving after the start of the game will be added to the end of the batting order.

**3.3 Defensive Innings Played**

- 3.3.1 No player will sit the bench in consecutive innings, including extra innings.
- 3.3.2 Free substitution of defensive players is allowed.
- 3.3.3 Each player must play the number of innings on defense shown in the applicable table below, based on the number of players available at the start of the game and defensive innings played by her team, provided the player:
  - a. Is present at the start of the game.
  - b. Has not been a discipline problem.
  - c. Does not leave prior to the end of the game.
  - d. Is not injured during the game.

**Minors & Majors** (10 defensive positions)

Defensive Innings	Players at Start of Game					
	15	14	13	12	11	10
4	2	2	3	3	3	4
5	3	3	3	4	4	5
6	4	4	4	5	5	6
7	4	5	5	5	6	7

**Seniors** (9 defensive positions):

Defensive Innings	Players at Start of Game						
	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
4	2	2	2	3	3	3	4
5	3	3	3	3	4	4	5
6	3	3	4	4	4	5	6
7	4	4	4	5	5	6	7

- 3.3.4 After 4 defensive innings have been played, no player will have sat the bench one inning more than any other player. Furthermore, for the remainder of the game, no player will sit the bench one inning more than any other player.
- 3.3.5 Each team shall rotate all players through infield and outfield positions throughout the season. All positions in the outfield are considered one position. No player should have to play only outfield every game if this is not what the player wants to do.

### 3.4 Call Ups - Not Enough Players:

- 3.4.1 If a team will have 10 or fewer players in **Minors** or **Majors**, or 9 or fewer players in **Seniors**, they may call up a player from the league immediately below its level (i.e., **Minors** may call up **Coach Pitch**, **Majors** may call up **Minors**, and **Seniors** may call up **Majors**).
- 3.4.2 The player called up to play may not miss their own game to play up.
- 3.4.3 All the players on the team's roster will play at least the same number of innings as the player called up - provided the team's regular player(s) are present at the start of the game.
- 3.4.4 No called up players may pitch.
- 3.4.5 The called up player must be reported to the opposing team as such and must wear her own team jersey.
- 3.4.6 Only currently registered DYA players can participate in a DYA game.
- 3.4.7 Violation of the rule is subject to game forfeiture (the game is still played, but for **Seniors** is considered a loss in the standings and tournament seeding).

## 4 Ground Rules

### 4.1 Playing Conditions

- 4.1.1 Ground rules (playing conditions such as a muddy spot in the infield, or field anomalies such as a hole in the fence) will be discussed before each game.
- 4.1.2 Coaches and umpires have the responsibility for making any changes to the ground rules to protect the fielders or batters in the game.

**NOTE** - Coaches are NOT to change rules (i.e., do not make agreements that alter league rules such as on overthrows).

### 4.2 Dugout Assignments

- 4.2.1 Home team will sit on the first base side.
- 4.2.2 Visiting team will site on the third base side.

### 4.3 Base Coaches

**NOTE** - Base Coach Boxes are not drawn on the diamond; however the area near 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, approximately 3-4 feet in foul territory extending approximately 15-20 feet towards home plate from the base, should be considered the Coach's Boxes.

- 4.3.1 Base coach boxes are in play.
- 4.3.2 Base coaches must stay in the vicinity of the base they are coaching.
- 4.3.3 Base coaches are not permitted to influence play by touching a runner (i.e., pushing a runner off the base, grabbing a runner to prevent overrunning the base, etc.).
- 4.3.4 Base coaches must be adults only. Players may not coach bases.

### 4.4 Balls Out of Play

- 4.4.1 Out of play shall be that area beyond a line (real or imaginary) extending indefinitely from the outside poles of the backstop fences, parallel with the foul lines. The umpire shall rule whether the ball has gone out-of-play and will make the appropriate rulings.
- 4.4.2 A ball that lands in fair territory beyond first (1<sup>st</sup>) or third (3<sup>rd</sup>) base and subsequently bounds out of play shall be a ground rule double.
- 4.4.3 Any ball dropping in fair territory in front of an outfielder and bounding out of play (including fair balls that roll under or bounce over the outfield fence) shall be ruled a ground rule double.

## 4.5 Time Outs

- 4.5.1 Time is out only when called by the umpire. Any player or coach may ask for time, but time is out only when called by the umpire.
- 4.5.2 On a batted ball, time may be called under the following conditions: Any infielder, including the pitcher and catcher, must have possession of the ball and be within the general vicinity of the base path and any runner or runners have stopped at their base(s). If a runner has made a turn at any base, the player may continue to run, even if the infielder has possession of the ball. Time cannot be called in order to stop a runner from advancing. If a runner has stopped on a base after a hit ball and a play is made on another runner going to another base, the stopped runner may advance at his/her own risk. For example, if the runner going from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> stops on 3<sup>rd</sup> and there is a runner going to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, on whom a play is made, the runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> may advance at their own risk toward home.

## 5 Local Rules

### 5.1 Batting

- 5.1.1 Bunting is allowed in all leagues. An unsuccessful bunt (missed or foul) with two strikes is an automatic strike out.
- 5.1.2 Strike Outs
- A Strike Out is when a batter has accrued 3 strikes by swinging or called by the umpire.
  - A foul ball is counted as a strike, but the third strike cannot be determined by a foul ball. There is no limit on the number of 2 strike foul balls a batter may hit.
  - A third strike can occur on a foul tip. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat to the catcher's mitt or hand and is legally caught. It is a strike and the ball is live (it is to be treated as a swing and a miss). A batted ball that is tipped and not caught is a foul ball.
- 5.1.3 **Uncaught** (Dropped) Third Strike
- Minors & Majors:** The batter is out on any third strike; i.e., the batter cannot become a runner on a dropped third strike.
  - Majors & Seniors:** The **Uncaught** (Dropped) Third Strike rule will be observed, i.e., when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter can become a runner on an **uncaught** (dropped) third strike except when first base is occupied with fewer than two outs. See Rule 5.2.6.c for special situation regarding the use of safety bases.  
**Majors** (only) – Special Circumstances (these are to encourage catchers to throw to first)
    - The batter-runner may not advance beyond first, even if the catcher throws to first.
    - Base runners may not advance on an uncaught third strike unless legally attempting to steal, or there are two outs and the base runner is forced to advance by the batter-runner.
    - On an uncaught or caught third strike with first base occupied and less than 2 outs, the batter is out, and base runners may only advance if attempting to legally steal.
- 5.1.4 Thrown Bats/Objects
- Bats or any other items thrown in anger may subject said player to disqualification. There will be no warnings for objects thrown in anger.
  - A player who throws the bat, regardless of whether the ball was hit fair, foul or missed it altogether, shall immediately be called out and all base runners are returned to their bases. No warnings shall be issued for thrown bats.
- 5.1.5 Batting Order - If a player leaves the game for any reason, and their "at bat" comes up, the player's "at bat" will be skipped without penalty.

## 5.2 Base Running

5.2.1 **Sliding** - It is DYA's objective to teach and encourage proper sliding. Whether or not to slide is at the discretion of the player; however, a base runner not sliding **must** avoid collision with the fielder or be called out.

In all leagues, players are to avoid flagrant contact. Flagrant contact will not be tolerated and may result in disqualification.

- a. Base runners are generally permitted the free privilege to run from base to base without being physically blocked or hindered (called defensive obstruction) by a fielder, including the catcher. The only time a fielder does not have to "get out of the way" of a base runner is:
  - i. The fielder is in the act of fielding a batted ball,
  - ii. The fielder is receiving a thrown ball (defined as the ball is in flight over the infield towards that fielder), or
  - iii. The fielder is in possession of the ball.
- b. If a fielder is obstructing (as defined above) the path of the base runner, the runner may run outside the baseline to avoid a collision with the fielder and will not be subject to being called out.
- c. If a fielder is legally in the path of the base runner, the runner, if not sliding, may avoid a collision with the fielder by running around the fielder, but may be subject to being called out if running outside of the baseline as determined by the umpire.

5.2.2 Lead Offs are not permitted in any league.

- a. Base runners shall not be off the base prior to the pitched ball being released from the pitchers hand. PENALTY: Base runner is OUT.

5.2.3 **Base Stealing** – For purposes of DYA, the definition of stealing shall include advancing a base by stealing, advancing a base on a wild pitch, and advancing a base on a passed ball. Base Stealing is permitted as follows:

- a. **Minors**: Base stealing is allowed from second to third base at any time. If there is a base runner on first base during an attempted steal, the runner on first cannot advance to second. If there is an overthrow on a steal attempt at third, the base runner may not advance to home and any base runner on first may not advance to second.

~~b. **Majors**: Base runners may only steal second base when there are two outs and may steal third base at any time. Players may only steal one base at a time. Stealing of home is not allowed under any circumstances. Furthermore, a base runner cannot advance to home on a pick-off play at any base.~~

- b. **Majors & Seniors**: Base runners may steal any base, anytime, including home.

NOTE: Once the Pitcher has the ball near the rubber:

- i. A batter-runner who rounds 1<sup>st</sup> toward 2<sup>nd</sup> must, without hesitation, return to 1<sup>st</sup> or attempt to advance to 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- ii. A batter-runner who overruns 1<sup>st</sup> toward right field and turns left, must return non-stop to 1<sup>st</sup> or attempt to advance to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Any move directly towards 2<sup>nd</sup> commits the runner to attempt to advance to 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- iii. A batter-runner who overruns 1<sup>st</sup> toward right field, and turns right, must return to 1<sup>st</sup>.
- iv. Base-runners must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.

PENALTY: The ball is dead and the runner is out (only one runner may be called out.). Other runners are returned to the last base touched. EXCEPTION: The batter-runner will not be declared out if a play is made on another runner (a fake throw is considered a play), the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball, or moves away from the area of the rubber.

#### 5.2.4 Ball In Play – **Minors & Majors** (only):

- a. When a ball is hit to the outfield, the ball is in play until the ball is returned and controlled by any player who is positioned within the baselines, all base runners are on their bases and time is called by the umpire at which time the ball becomes dead.
- b. When the ball is returned to the infield, the base runner(s) will stop at the closest base, but may be tagged out if not on the base. If a play is made on the base runner, the ball remains in play.

5.2.5 The offensive team should use a “courtesy runner” for the catcher when there are two outs. This is a “speed up” rule intended to keep the games moving along. Note: use the player who made the last batted out.

#### 5.2.6 **Double Bases** (Safety Bases)

- a. The batter-runner is to use the outside base (the one in foul territory) after hitting the ball in play and the fielder (typically the first baseman) is use the inside base (the base in fair territory), with the noted exceptions below.
- b. If the first baseman is not occupying the inside base, the batter-runner may use either base.
- c. **Majors & Seniors:** on an **uncaught** (dropped) third strike that bounds in foul territory on the first base side, if the catcher throws to the first baseman from foul territory, the first baseman shall occupy the base in foul territory and the runner has the right to the base in fair territory. Note that the batter-runner may not know where the ball is being thrown from; thus, the path must be decided by the position of the first baseman.

### 5.3 Pitching

5.3.1 Pitches must be thrown underhand (max. 3-foot arch). The arc of the ball is to simulate fast-pitch, but accuracy is more important than the speed.

- **Minors** only: A windmill windup is required.
- **Majors** only: **The pitcher is highly encouraged to wear a mask.**

5.3.2 Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher’s plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher’s plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher’s plate.

- a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.
- b. The pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
- c. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher’s plate without having possession of the ball.

#### 5.3.3 About the Pitch:

- a. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
- b. Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. *Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.*
- c. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground and within the 24-inch length. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher’s plate is illegal.

## 5.3.4 Illegal Pitches

- a. **Minors & Majors:** There is no penalty for illegal pitches. The umpire should discretely inform the Coach and the Coach should work with the pitcher to correct the mistake.
- b. **Seniors:** the ball is dead at the end of playing action, if the ball is pitched. A ball is called on the batter, and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out.

## 5.3.5 Pitching Inning Limits

- a. Pitchers may pitch 3 innings maximum per game.
- b. Any part of an inning pitched (i.e., one pitch) counts as 1 of the 3 innings.
- c. The potential of game forfeiture (recorded as loss) exists if the above rule is not adhered to, including tournament play. The Program Director shall determine forfeitures under this rule.
- d. The 3 innings do not have to be pitched consecutively.
- e. When a pitcher enters the game, the pitcher must pitch to at least one batter and until the batter is out or on base before being removed as the pitcher (in other words, a pitcher may only be substituted in the middle of an at bat if the pitcher is injured).
- f. **Seniors (Only):** Pitchers may pitch 4 innings maximum per game. If a game goes past 6 innings, a pitcher may pitch beyond the 4 inning limit.

5.3.6 **Hit By Pitch (HBP)** - A batter is awarded first base if a pitched ball touches any part of the batter or their clothing, providing that a., b., and c. are true:

- a. The pitch is outside of the strike zone,
- b. The batter did not swing at the pitch, and
- c. The batter attempts to avoid the pitch.

Regarding condition c, the following applies:

- i. A batter that had no opportunity to avoid the pitch or “freezes” (i.e., pitcher throws so hard or batter is so scared they have no time to react to avoid pitch) is considered HBP,
- ii. A batter that “leans” into the pitch to purposefully get hit is not a HBP, and the umpire is to call a ball or strike as if the batter had not been in the way of the ball,
- iii. Turning one’s body is considered an attempt to avoid being hit.

A pitch that first touches the ground and then hits the batter is considered a HBP provided b. & c. are true.

Any time the batter is touched by a pitched ball, the umpire shall declare the play DEAD (regardless of a. - c. above) and runners cannot advance unless forced by the batter being awarded first base.

- d. A pitcher who hits three batters in the same inning must be removed as the pitcher for the remainder of that inning (applies to all leagues).

5.3.7 Walks - **Minors:**

- a. There will be no walks allowed.
- b. Once a fourth ball is called, the batter’s coach will begin to pitch to the batter. Coach-pitchers must be ready to enter the game throughout their team’s offensive series as to not delay the timing of the game. The coach shall pitch from the rubber and abide to the pitching arc and speed requirements as outlined in Rule 5.3.1. The player-pitcher will remain on the field within three feet to the left or right of the coach-pitcher.
- c. The batter will begin with the same strike count.
- d. The coach has a maximum of 5 pitches for the batter to either hit the ball fairly into play or strike out.
- e. The umpire will call each pitch to determine if three strikes have been thrown. If a strike out occurs before the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter is out.

- f. If the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled, a replacement pitch will be awarded.
- g. There will be no bunting, stealing, or batters hit-by-pitch while a coach-pitcher is in the game.
- h. If a hit ball strikes a coach-pitcher unintentionally, then the ball will remain live and in-play. If a coach intentionally touches a hit ball, the ball shall be dead and the batter will be out.

#### 5.3.8 Walks - **Majors & Seniors**:

- a. WALKS are four balls called by the umpire.
- b. There is no "WALK LIMIT" per inning.
- c. Coaches are encouraged to change pitchers who are struggling to throw strikes.

#### 5.3.9 Visits to the Mound:

- a. Each team will be permitted two (2) free visits to the mound per game to consult with the team's pitcher, but only one **free** visit in an inning. On the **second visit in an inning or** third visit during the game, as well as each subsequent visit to the mound, the pitcher must be removed as the pitcher. The removed pitcher may continue to stay in the field and play another position.
- b. For purposes of this rule, any time the pitcher is changed during an inning, it counts as a visit to the mound, regardless of whether or not the coach actually leaves the bench and goes to the mound. Thus, if during the inning the coach does not go to the mound, but directs the pitcher to trade positions with another player, it shall be treated as if the coach had made a trip to the mound to make the change and the team shall be charged accordingly with a trip.

## 5.4 Defense

### 5.4.1 Number of Defensive Players

- a. **Minors & Majors**: teams may field 10 players on defense, four of whom must be outfielders. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass and not be positioned in the infield area.
- b. **Seniors**: teams may field 9 players on defense (3 outfielders).
- c. Teams are permitted to play with fewer than required number of players, but must have at least eight players on the field.

### 5.4.2 The **Infield Fly** Rule does NOT apply in any softball league.

## 5.5 Overthrows

### 5.5.1 Play on overthrows shall be:

- a. If the ball goes out-of-play, the runners are awarded the base they are going to at the time the ball is thrown, plus one additional base.
- b. If the ball remains in play, the runners may advance at their own risk (in **Minors & Majors** only, limit one base).

## 5.6 End of an Inning

### 5.6.1 Three outs end a half-inning in all leagues.

### 5.6.2 **Minors**: A team's at bat is completed when five (5) runs have been scored in the half-inning, regardless of the number of outs.

### 5.6.3 **Majors**: A team's at bat is completed when six (6) runs have been scored in the half-inning, regardless of the number of outs.

### 5.6.4 **Seniors**: A team's at bat is completed when seven (7) runs have been scored in the half-inning, regardless of the number of outs.

**UMPIRE CREDO**

- ✓ Umpires, while on the field, should not indulge in conversation with players. Keep out of the coaching box and do not talk to the coach on duty.
- ✓ Always be courteous to coaches, players, and fans; avoid visiting in either team’s dugout.
- ✓ Dress appropriately and look professional. Be active and alert on the field.
- ✓ When you enter a ball park your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of baseball.
- ✓ Keep the game moving. A ball game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpires.
- ✓ You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position which requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.
- ✓ You no doubt are going to make mistakes, but never attempt to “even up” after having made one. Make all decisions as you see them. Forget which is the home or visiting team.
- ✓ Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell, or a thrown ball finished up, than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly, or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a runner out.
- ✓ Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting “out” or “safe.” Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.
- ✓ Have a conference with your partner so you can right a wrong call when you are convinced that you or your partner has made an glaring error. Do not carry conferences to extremes, but remember, the first requirement is to try to get the right call made. So, if in doubt, don’t hesitate to call a conference. Umpire dignity is important but never as important as “making the right call.”
- ✓ Most important rule for umpires is always “BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY.” Even when your decision is 100% correct, others will still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely.
- ✓ Finally, be courteous, impartial and firm, and so compel respect from all.

**The 10 Commandments of Umpiring, by Ford C. Frick (1949)**

#	Commandment
1	Keep your eye on the ball.
2	Keep all your personalities out of your work. Forget and forgive.
3	Avoid sarcasm. Don't insist on the last word.
4	Never charge a player and, above all, no pointing your finger or yelling.
5	Hear only the things you should hear - be deaf to others.
6	Keep your temper. A decision made in anger is never sound.
7	Watch your language.
8	Take pride in your work at all times. Remember, respect for an umpire is created off the field as well as on.
9	Review your work. You will find, if you are honest, that 90% of the trouble is traceable to loafing.
10	No matter what your opinion of another umpire, never make an adverse comment regarding him. To do so is despicable and ungentlemanly.