

## Juniors League (8u) 2008 Rules

The intent of this league is to teach players 8 and under (as of 1/1/08) the game of fastpitch softball. It is a beginning league with modified rules to aid in the training of players with little or no experience. Our goal is to stress good sportsmanship and fair play while learning the game...and having fun!

### PITCHING:

- The pitching rubber is **30' away from the plate.**
- This league will be strictly coach pitch for the *first two weeks* of the season. After that time, all teams will be expected to have at least one player who can, at least on occasion, throw a strike. In all games, a player pitcher will now throw 3 pitches, followed by 4 more from the batting team's coach, if necessary.
- The pitch is to have little or no arc. Any part of the windmill pitch is acceptable, including the "slingshot" pitch. (This is what the players should use if they cannot throw the windmill pitch for a strike.)
- A **big strike zone** should be used: Shoulders to knees and one ball width on either side of the plate is appropriate.
- A coach from the **defensive** team should umpire behind the plate. Strikes should be called and counted if thrown in the strike zone by a player pitcher, or if the pitch is swung at. Batters must be encouraged to swing at good pitches from player pitchers. Pitches from a coach must be swung at to count as a strike. **Any combination of 3 strikes is an out.**
- There are no walks.
- **If the batter does not hit the ball into play after 7 pitches, she is out.** *To keep the game moving and to be fair to all players, coaches must adhere to this rule.* The exception is if the 7<sup>th</sup> pitch or third strike is fouled. She may continue to 'stay alive' by fouling pitches, but if more than 7 pitches are thrown and she lets a pitch go by, she is out. (Practice your pitching, coaches!)
- The home plate umpire/coach should also serve as a 'backstop' to keep the game moving.
- The dropped third strike rule *is not* in effect.
- To keep the game moving, please ensure that player pitchers have shown in practice that can at least occasionally throw a strike. **Make sure you are teaching pitching in your practices.**

### BASE RUNNING:

- Runners may only advance **one base on an overthrow on each play**, regardless of how many overthrows occur.
- Runners may only advance one base if any error occurs.
- Runners must wait until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand to lead off. If the runner leaves early, she is out.
- Runners **must** slide to avoid contact. If a fielder has possession of the ball and there is contact with a runner who is not sliding, the runner is out.

- Fielders may not block a base or base path without possession of the ball. If this occurs, the runner is awarded the next base.
- Stealing is **not** allowed in this league.
- If a runner or batter intentionally takes off her helmet when running bases, she is out.
- Runners must stay within 3 feet of the base line when running the bases or she will be called out.

### **HITTING:**

- A **continuous batting order** will be used to ensure that all participants bat. All players attending the game will be put into the batting order and will hit whether they are playing in the field or not.
- Bunting is allowed and encouraged. **Comment:** Teach the kids to play the game and understand different strategies.
- If a player fouls a bunt attempt with 2 strikes, she is out.
- Home plate is fair territory. Teach your players to run after any hit.
- A ball is foul if it strikes the batter while in the box.
- A batter is out if a batted ball strikes her outside the batters box.
- **“Throwing the bat”** after a swing and hit must be strictly managed at this level to avoid injury and to make sure the girls develop sound habits. If a girl “throws” the bat, coaches are required by the rules to issue a warning by a) bring the girl back to the plate (if a hit) b) explain the infraction clearly c) explain that if she throws the bat a 2<sup>nd</sup> time, she will be “out”. If the girl throws the bat at her next time up, she will immediately be considered “out” (coaches obviously must explain the infraction again). If the bat is thrown on any subsequent at bat, the girl will not be allowed to bat for the remainder of the game. Coaches, **please** take “bat throwing” seriously and manage it strictly to the rules provided.
- A maximum of 6 runs may be scored each inning per team, provided that the team has not acquired 3 outs. The offensive team must notify the opposing coach when the sixth run has scored.

### **DEFENSE:**

- All players, including pitchers, may be freely substituted and should play relatively equal amounts of time at appropriate positions on defense.
- The defense should consist of 10 players, with the outfielders positioned in left, left-center, right-center, and right. There should not be a short-fielder or extra infielder. Outfielders should play no closer than 5’ inside the fringe of the infield.
- The infield fly rule **is not** in effect.

### **OTHER:**

- Games shall have a time limit of 1 hour 15 minutes, or 5 innings, whichever comes first. The team batting when the time limit occurs should complete its ‘at bat’.
- The pitcher’s circle is 16’ in diameter.
- An 11” Incrediball will be used in games.

- There is no penalty for less than 9 players. Coaches should share players when necessary.
- It is important to keep the game moving. Coaches are responsible for planning their defensive positions before taking the field. **Player must be encouraged to run on and off the field. Catchers must have their gear on prior to the third out each inning, unless they are batting or on base.**
- Players are **not** to wear jewelry of any kind (*including earrings*) during the game.
- Cheers and chants for your team are encouraged. They promote teamwork, motivate kids, and add to the child's overall experience. **However, no chants or cheers that taunt or make fun of an opposing team or individual player will be tolerated.** No "swing batter" or pitcher taunts are allowed. Please be sure to monitor this during games and explain why good sportsmanship does not include taunting.
- Refer to ASA rules for other play situations.