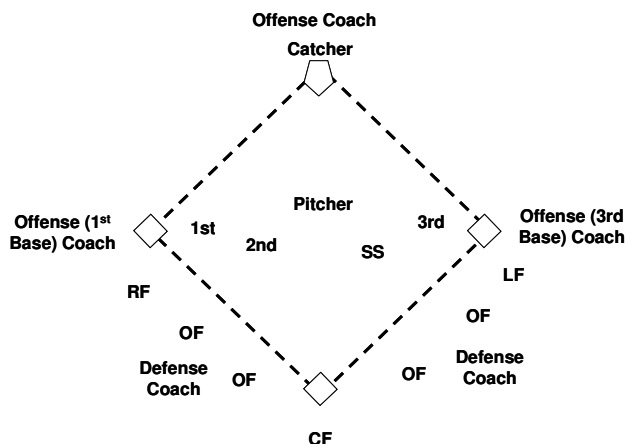


Little Juniors (4-6) 2008 Rules

The Little Juniors League is designed as an introduction to softball for beginning players ages 4-6 as of January 1, 2008. The emphasis for coaches in this league is on instruction of basic softball skills as well as teamwork and good sportsmanship. The intent is an introduction to the game of softball and organized sports in general. The league will be for learning. **The overall objective = Learning + Fun.**

- Games are played with an 11-inch rubberized ball.
- **DEFENSE:** Each team will play all players on defense with the following positioning:



Note: This diagram shows the suggested position of players on defense. Coaches may experiment with playing some OF in front or behind the base paths, however please keep paths clear. The primary objective of defense is to field the ball and throw to the correct base. More often than not, CF will cover 2nd base. Please maintain only 1 player at the pitcher's position.

- Coaches *please* make every attempt to give all players a chance to play in every defensive position during the year.
- **OFFENSE:** For the first 2 weeks of the season, a tee will be used exclusively. After that, coaches should make a decision with each batter whether to pitch or use a tee. If the decision is to pitch, the batting team's coach will pitch *a maximum* of 3 soft-toss pitches from 20' to 25'. *Unlike slow-pitch softball, pitches should have minimal arc. This type of pitch is vital to help players develop a swing that will be successful in fastpitch softball.* If the ball is not hit in 3 attempts, a tee is placed on the plate. A player is then given 4 additional swings, if necessary, to hit a fair ball. **To keep the game moving you must limit the number of pitches!**
- A team's 'at-bat' is over when either 1) the defense makes 3 fielded outs or 2) *the offense has batted through 7 batters.* If a player cannot hit a fair ball in the seven total attempts allowed, the out is not counted as an out for the team.
- Bunting is not allowed.
- ***"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 2nd time, she will be "out" and d) then allow her to bat again. 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.
- **BASE RUNNING:** The basic concept of leading off should be introduced at this level if possible. Girls should learn to start to move off the base when the batter begins her swing. This will make it much easier to teach them to lead off when pitching is introduced at the next level.

- On an overthrow, the runner may advance to the next base, but no further advancement, regardless of how many overthrows there may be.
- There is no stealing.
- There is no infield fly rule in this league.
- **GENERAL:** Games are one hour and fifteen minutes in length. The team batting when the time limit occurs should complete their 'at-bat'.
- Coaches *please* prepare lineups for each inning and teach their players to hustle on and off the field. It is also important to have a coach ready with the tee for each batter so very little time is lost between pitching and setting up the tee. Game time moves very quickly, so give them as much actual playing time as possible.
- The home plate umpire/coach should act as a 'backstop' to keep the game moving.
- There are no umpires. Base coaches should make the calls.
- Two defensive coaches may be in the field with their defense.
- Players are NOT to wear jewelry of any kind (including earrings) during the game.