

Major League (12u) 2008 Rules

The intent of this league is to teach players 12 and under (as of 1/1/08) the game of fastpitch softball. It is a beginning/intermediate league with modified rules to aid in the training of players in a competitive environment. Umpires are used and ASA rules followed with modifications noted below. Our goal is to stress good sportsmanship and fair play while learning the game...and having fun!

PITCHING:

- The pitching rubber is **40' away from the plate.**
- The pitch is to have little or no arc. Any part of the windmill pitch is acceptable, including the "slingshot" pitch.
- A **big strike zone** should be used: Shoulders to knees and one ball width on either side of the plate is appropriate.
- **All batters begin with a one-strike count.**
- ****CHANGE** The dropped third strike rule is not in effect this year.** If a third strike is dropped, the batter is out and cannot advance to 1st base.
- Batters may advance to second base after a walk, but this will be considered a stolen base (see base running below).

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 allowed, but a player may only steal **one base total** each time she is on the base paths. If a player steals second, for example, she may not steal any other bases during that time on the base paths.
- Stealing of home is allowed, if it is the only time that player has stolen during that trip on the bases. Advancing on a passed ball or wild pitch is considered stealing.
- If the ball is overthrown on an attempt to steal a base, the runner may advance one additional base only. For example, a runner steals second and the ball is overthrown. The runner may advance to third, but cannot continue home.
- **Exception:** If a player has already stolen a base, and the defense attempts to 'pick off' the player on a subsequent play and the ball is overthrown, the play is considered an overthrow and the runner may advance one base at her own risk. *The player may not attempt to steal on the throw, but may advance only if the ball is actually overthrown.*

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.
- 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.
- 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 umpire 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.
- The infield fly rule *is* in effect.

OTHER:

- Games shall have a time limit of 1 hour 15 minutes, or 5 innings, whichever comes first. If the home team trails when time expires, they will have the opportunity to bat after the visiting team bats. If the visiting team trails, they will only be able to complete their at bat unless they take the lead. Games ending in a tie will be recorded as such.
- The pitcher's circle is 16' in diameter.
- A 12" regulation softball will be used in games and practice.
- 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. The penalty will be an automatic out for the defensive team at their next at bat. 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.