



Avon Lake Baseball and Softball Recreation Leagues

Sport	Softball
League Name	Minor
Grades	3 rd and 4 th

1. Overall Governing Rules

Rules governing the Avon Lake Minor Softball League are in accordance with the Official Rules of Little League Softball. Any exception, additions, deletions, or alteration of the Little League Softball rules are listed in this document and shall supersede the Little League rules. The exceptions are in the interest of safety, fair play and even more competition.

2. League Director and Responsibilities

League directors are appointed by, and serve at the discretion of the Avon Lake Recreation Department. League directors are responsible for:

- Running their respective league(s)
- Appointing managers
- Scheduling and determining how to conduct a draft or whether to have a draft
- Re-scheduling rainouts
- Managing protests

3. League Age

The Minor league is intended for 3rd and 4th graders. Playing up from a lower league is not applicable to the Minor League.

4. Field Dimensions

- Base length: 60 feet
- Pitcher's rubber to home: 35 feet

A player may move up as long as pitching motion completes inside the pitching circle.

- Pitching circle: 8 foot radius around pitching rubber

5. Pre Game

a. **Ball size** – An 11 inch yellow softball will be used

b. **Bat and Equipment Rules**

i. **Bats:** Must be Little League compliant.

ii. **Head Gear**

- Batters and base runners are required to wear protective headgear, which give protection to the head, temples, ears, and the base of the skull.
- Batting helmets must have a facemask when playing in Avon Lake.
- PENALTY: Base runners may be called out for willfully removing a helmet while on the base paths at the discretion of the umpire(s).

iii. **Catchers Gear**

- Catchers are required to wear a facemask, padded chest protector, shin guards, throat protection and head gear that protects the entire head when catching behind the plate. No “skull caps” are permitted.
- A mask is required for players to warm up the pitcher

iv. **Cleats**

- The use of metal cleats is forbidden
- PENALTY
 - a. The offender shall be removed from the game.
 - b. If the removal of a player results in the team having less than the required amount to start a game, that team will forfeit the game.

c. **Behavior**

- i. Batting order must be exchanged prior to the game start.
- ii. If a player shows up late, that player goes to the bottom of the batting order.
- iii. Jewelry – No player shall wear jewelry. Newly pierced ears must be bandaged.

d. **Call ups & Borrowing Players**

- i. Not applicable to the minor league.
- ii. A team may borrow a player from another League team if opposing team agrees. This is typically done by opposing team providing fields but both teams keep their own batting order. Example: Pirates have 7 girls at the game, the Indians have 10, when the Indians are batting, they may allow their last batter that inning to play the field for the Pirates. If she comes to bat, the Indians should swap that player allowing their player to bat.
- iii. Borrowing Players does NOT apply in the playoffs.
- iv. Girls called up or even borrowed should be encouraged to give it their all for their new team for that game or even half an inning.

e. **Coaches**

- i. Each team is allowed 1 head coach, 2 assistants and 1 scorekeeper in the dugout.
- ii. In the Minor League, a defensive coach is allowed on the field from behind the infield
- iii. Each team batting is permitted a coach at 1st and 3rd.

f. **Minimum number to play**

- i. Teams must field at least eight (8) registered players to start a game and must maintain at least eight (8) players throughout the game.

g. **Rain outs**

- i. Rainouts are determined by the league
- ii. For games where rainouts may occur just prior to the start of the game, the umpire(s) have final say on whether a game can occur.

6. Pre-Game Rules

a. **Dugout and warmup times**

- i. The home team shall occupy the 1st base dugout

- ii. Each team is permitted 15 minutes of on-field warmup
- iii. The visiting team will warmup first and the home team second so that the game may start with the home team on the field first.
- iv. If there is a shortened warmup time, the time is to be divided equally.

b. Game Length

- i. No inning shall start after 1:45 hours of the official recorded starting time.
- ii. The start of a new inning is the completion of the final out of the previous inning.
- iii. Regulation games shall be six (6) innings in duration.
- iv. A game tied at the end of regulation results in a tie, except in playoff games.
- v. A game is official if four (4) innings have been completed and if the home team is winning after 3 ½ innings.

c. Keeping score

- i. The home team is responsible for keeping the official score.
- ii. The game schedule will indicate which team will act as home team.
- iii. Scores should be sent to the league director following the completion of a game.

d. Minimum playing time

i. Equal playing time

- All players who show up in proper uniform on time shall play a minimum of 2 defensive innings (6 defensive outs) per game unless injury, illness or disciplinary action dictates otherwise.
- Hats / visors are not required in softball.
- All players should receive equal playing time and no player shall sit two consecutive innings.

- ii. Failure to abide by this rule will result in a two game suspension of the offending manager and a forfeit of the game.

e. Start time

- i. All weekday games shall start promptly at 6:30 PM unless otherwise specified.
- ii. Forfeit time shall be 6:15 PM.

f. Suspended Games

- i. If a game is called for any reason before it is official, that game shall be considered a "suspended game" and shall be completed from the point of suspension.
- ii. If a game is called for any reason after becoming official, but in an uncompleted inning, the final game score will revert back to the previously completed inning.
- iii. If a game is called for any reason after becoming official with the teams tied the game shall remain a tie.

7. In-Game rules

- a. Continuous Batting Order** - All team members will bat in a continuous batting rotation
- b. Continuous Walk** – In the Minor League, a walked batter may not immediately steal 2nd base if the catcher does not return the ball to the pitcher in time.

- c. **Courtesy Runner** – may be used to speed up the game for when the catcher is on base and there are 2 outs.
- d. **Defensive positions**
 - a. 10 players in the field to include 4 outfielders
 - b. Outfielders must be on outfield grass at least 12 ft. from the infield during a pitch.
 - c. Defensive substitutions are free except that a removed pitcher may not assume the catching position.
- e. **Dropped Third Strike** – Does not apply in the Minor League
- f. **Hit batter** – a direct pitch or ball bouncing and hitting the batter awards the hitter first base.
- g. **Infield Fly Rule** – Does not apply in the Minor League.
- h. **Lead-offs**
 - a. Lead-offs are not permitted until the ball crosses home plate.
 - b. Players leaving early will be sent back to the original base.
 - c. After multiple (3 or more) infractions, the umpire shall warn the player and call the runner out for another infraction.
- i. **Maximum Batters**
 - a. Play continues until 3 outs are recorded or 10 batters bat.
 - b. Upon the 10th batter coming to the plate, the hitting team must announce the 10th batter and a two out situation results.
- j. **Mercy Rules**
 - a. There is a 3 out or 10 batter per team per inning.
 - b. If a team is leading by at least ten (10) runs or more after five or more innings have been played, the game shall be terminated and the leading team declared the winner.
 - c. The bottom half of the fifth or sixth inning need not be played or completed if the home team achieves such a lead.
 - d. Equal number of bats unless the lead is by the home team.
- k. **Ninth Batter Out** - No ninth or 10th batter out rule shall apply. Any team who drops below eight (8) registered players at any point during a game will forfeit the game to the other team unless the coach of the team with the injured/ejected player chooses to continue.
- l. **On Deck** – There is no on-deck circle. Players may not practice swinging until stepping into the batter's box.
- m. **Pitching**
 - a. There is no restriction on number of pitches per game or week but managers are encouraged to develop multiple pitchers for the betterment of the game.
 - b. Every third pitcher must be 3rd grader and said pitcher shall pitch at least 1 inning. This rule continues into future games.
 - c. Making one pitch constitutes an inning.
 - d. There is no restriction on the speed of a pitch but the pitcher must use the windmill or slingshot motion to deliver the pitch.



- e. Pitchers are allowed 8 warm-up pitches for their first inning of pitching. After their first inning, 5 warmup pitches are allowed.
 - f. When the ball is in the possession of the pitcher within the pitching circle, play is stopped and the ball is dead. If a base runner has committed to the next base, she may continue to that base at the risk of being thrown out. The ball remains dead until the ball is pitched and crosses home plate.
- n. Sliding**
- a. Defensive players may not stand on home plate or any other base without the ball.
 - b. Requirement to slide
 - i. Runners are never required to slide, but to avoid interference or malicious contact the runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal.
 - ii. Diving or hurdling a player or jumping over the outstretched glove of a fielder at any base is prohibited.
 - iii. Any infraction of the above results in the runner being called out.
 - iv. Umpire determines whether a slide is legal or not.
- o. Stealing**
- a. Stealing is permitted for 2nd and 3rd base once the ball crosses home plate.
 - b. Stealing home plate is forbidden unless a pickoff play is attempted by the pitcher or catcher of the runner at 3rd base.
 - c. When stealing 2nd or 3rd, and an error occurs, the runner may not attempt to take the next base.

8. League Standings

- a. League standings will be determined on a point system.
- b. Two (2) points are awarded for a win or forfeit.
- c. One (1) point is awarded for a tie.
- d. There are no points for a loss.
- e. One (1) point is awarded to each team for a complete game.

9. Post Game

All teams shall leave the dugout as clean as or cleaner than when they arrived.

10. All Star Game

All-star games may be scheduled. All rules governing the games and selection of players is at the discretion of the league director.

11. Playoffs

- a. Regular season rules apply to the playoffs.
- b. Post season playoffs shall involve all teams. Top versus bottom pairings shall be employed to prevent strong teams from meeting prematurely.
- c. The home team for the playoffs will be decided as a result of the regular season finish. The team with more points will be the home team. In the event of a tie a coin toss will determine the home team.



12. Protests

- a. Protest shall involve rule interpretations only.
- b. Protests shall be made to the Avon Lake Recreation Department along with a \$100 fee. If the protest is upheld by the Recreation Department, the fee will be refunded.