



# Softball Alliance Rules

*Revised March 2021*

**General ASA Rules apply for all age groups except where modified below.**

1. The player's age for league purposes is her age on December 31st of the previous year.
2. League will begin play on April 1st and continue until June 15th (weather permitting).
3. An end of season playoff will be held for all age groups (weather permitting). *Playoff games will be played on any day during the week.*
4. Games will be played with 60-foot base paths.
5. HCRP will be responsible for providing and paying for the umpires. *Championship games will have two umpires.*
6. Weeknight games will begin at **6:00 pm** for 10u and 13U.
7. For every two teams entered into the league by each organization, they will have to provide one field for league play each day that league plays.
8. Home team must provide one new game ball and have two back up balls available.
9. Home team shall line and prep the field accordingly for each game.
10. Games will be a **maximum of 6 innings** in length for 8u and 10u age groups. Games will be a **maximum of 7 innings** for 13U.
11. Games may be shortened due to darkness or other unsafe conditions (determined by the umpire, or agreed upon by both coaches). No new inning may be started after 105 minutes (1 hr 45 mins)
  - a. *For playoff games - the minimum number of innings shall be four.*
12. All players attending will bat (a.k.a. Bat the Bench).
13. Teams must have a minimum of eight of their own players to begin a game. Teams may continue playing a game with 7 players (in this situation only - the 8th batter takes an automatic out). 10U teams are not required to play 10 defensive players.
14. Unlimited substitutions will be allowed. This rule is to include pitchers - who may return to pitch after playing elsewhere in a previous inning (as long as rules 16 and 17 are adhered to).
15. The number of innings a player plays in the field (defensive innings), may not exceed the number of defensive innings of any other teammate by more than one. (Example: If Sarah plays six defensive innings, everyone else on her team must have played five defensive innings.)
16. Each player will be limited to pitch a maximum of four innings (in any sequence) per game. (One pitch thrown is equivalent to pitching an entire inning).
17. Defensive positions Before Play Begins:
  - a. Outfielders should be positioned no closer than 10 yards beyond basepaths (i.e. 3 Steps in Grass) when play begins.
  - b. No more than 5 defensive players (4 Fielders and Pitcher) can be positioned on the infield to start the play.
18. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in one inning, she must either sit on the bench or be moved to a non-pitching position. If she returns in a subsequent inning, and hits two (2)

more batters for a total of four (4) batters, then she will not be allowed to pitch for the remainder of that game.

- a. Clarification/Point-of-Emphasis: Especially at the 10U level, a ball that bounces/rolls and hits a batter while still ruled a dead-ball shall not be considered a "credited" hit-by-pitch by this rule, and the batter, while having option to take first base, should be encouraged to remain hitting.

19. Any pitching style (High School Federation, ASA, NSA or Pony) is legal for League play. Both feet need to start on the rubber. Once the hands come together you may not step back off the rubber. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the rubber prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. You may not replant the pivot foot and push off again.
20. Batters may NOT Throw Bats. Upon first instance, BOTH teams will be warned verbally by umpire. All subsequent instances result in Dead Ball, batter-runner to be declared out and base-runners return to their previous bases.
21. Coaches shall remain in the first and third base boxes when their team is at bat.
22. Absolutely no one (coach, player, fan or parent) is permitted to sit or watch the game from behind the backstop while a game is in progress.
23. Any coach, player, parent, or spectator ejected from a game must leave the field area immediately and may not continue to watch the game.
24. Game results should be emailed to the HC Alliance League Commissioner Patrick McGinnis <pmcginnis@howardcountymd.gov> so that results can be tracked for post-season play seeding determinations.
  - a. Seeds will be determined by Alliance commissioners.
  - b. Seeding based on wins/losses. Tie breakers are runs against, then runs scored.
  - c. Home field assignments during playoffs are not solely based on seeds but on organization field assignments. Meaning #1 seed may travel first round due to home field assignments.

## 8U Age Group

Games will be played on **Saturdays**

### **SPECIFIC MODIFICATIONS**

1. Games will be played on 60-foot base paths, and a 35-foot pitching distance (approximately)
2. Games will consist of Coach Pitch.
  - a. Each batter gets four (4) strikes. There are no called strikes, only swinging strikes. The rules on foul balls for the 8U league follow the normal pattern. That is, foul balls ARE strikes on the first, second, and third strikes. On the final strike, the batter is not out on a foul ball (that is not caught by a fielder).
3. No stealing of bases. No lead off from bases is permitted. A base runner may not leave the base until the batter makes contact with the ball.
4. No bunting
5. The infield fly rule will not be in effect for this age-group.
6. Batters may attempt to run for extra bases on any hit that leaves the infield. Once the ball is returned to the infield by the defense, the runner may not advance any further (even if there is an overthrow/error).
7. Batters are limited to a single if the batted ball does not leave the infield.
8. Ten (10) Players and two (2) coaches on the field. Coaches are encouraged to be on the field.
9. Base runners may not tag up and advance on caught fly balls. This is even true if the fielder catches the ball and inadvertently throws the ball away. However, a base runner may be "doubled off" should he or she be caught off base and a successful throw be made to the original base of the runner
10. Games will be self-umpired by coaches.
11. An inning is complete when three (3) outs are made or five (5) runs are scored, whichever happens first. No team can record more than five (5) runs per inning, except in the last inning. For the last inning, if the visiting team is trailing by any number of runs or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit, plus go ahead by five (5) runs. If the visiting team is leading in the last inning, it can only score five (5) runs. If the home team is trailing or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit plus go ahead by one (1) run to win the game. If the home team is leading in the last inning, it can only score five (5) runs. Tie games end in a tie. Extra innings are not allowed.

### **10u Age Group**

Games will be played on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**.

Pitching 35 feet; base 60 feet; 11-inch softball

#### **SPECIFIC MODIFICATIONS:**

1. Games are limited to a maximum of 6 innings.
2. Limited to twice per inning, including passed balls by the catcher: A runner can attempt to steal a base once the pitched ball crosses home plate. A runner may not lead off and must maintain contact with the base until the ball crosses home plate. No stealing of home.
3. No bunting
4. No dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike rule.
5. Teams may have as many as 10 players on the field.
6. The 10u League shall use a “modified player-pitch” format for all games. The “modified player-pitch” format is designed to minimize walks; thus allowing the batters to put the ball in play, while allowing the defensive team more opportunities to make defensive outs and giving pitchers more game experience in the circle. The intent of the “modified player-pitch” format is to create a livelier game, which enhances the enjoyment and skills of the players.
7. Coach Pitch Rules:
  - a. The coach will come in and pitch to any batter who has four balls. The batter will keep the same strike count and can only hit the ball or strike out. The umpire will record only strikes against the batter while a coach is pitching.
  - b. Note that no additional walks are allowed for any relief player pitcher that enters the game during that inning.
  - c. The coach shall pitch non-windmill to each batter and throw a flat (non-arc, non-slow pitch style) pitch at a speed as close as possible to a realistic game speed pitch.
  - d. While the coach is pitching to the batter, the player pitcher must be positioned within the pitcher’s circle, but not in such a way as to interfere with the coach who is pitching.
  - e. If the coach hits the batter a dead ball is declared and the batter continues batting.
  - f. If a batted ball hits the coach, the ball is live. The coach is considered to be part of the field, similar to a base umpire. **HOWEVER**, if the coach catches a batted ball, the batter will be declared out.
8. Play will stop when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle. There will be no advancements on overthrows.
9. An inning is complete when three (3) outs are made or five (5) runs are scored, whichever happens first. No team can record more than five (5) runs per inning, except in the last inning. For the last inning, if the visiting team is trailing by any number of runs or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit, plus go ahead by five (5) runs. If the visiting team is leading in the last inning, it can only score five (5) runs. If the home team is trailing or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit plus go ahead by one (1) run to win the game. Tie games end in a tie. Extra innings are not allowed.

### **13u Age Group**

Games will be played on **Mondays**, and **Saturdays**

Pitching 40 feet; base 60 feet; 12-inch softball.

1. Standard ASA rules apply for the 13 and under age group, except when superseded by those alliance-wide rules listed at the beginning of this document (first page).
2. Runners may attempt to steal when the ball crosses the plate, including home.
3. Players may slide feet first only
4. Teams may only have 9 players on the field.
5. Play will stop when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle and the umpire will call time.
6. An inning is complete when three (3) outs are made or five (5) runs are scored, whichever happens first. No team can record more than five (5) runs per inning, except in the last inning. For the last inning, if the visiting team is trailing by any number of runs or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit, plus go ahead by five (5) runs. If the visiting team is leading in the last inning, it can only score five (5) runs. If the home team is trailing or tied when it comes to bat, it can score as many runs as possible to make up any deficit plus go ahead by one (1) run to win the game. If the home team is leading in the last inning, it can only score five (5) runs. Tie games end in a tie. Extra innings are not allowed.