

# GENERAL RULES FOR NWRAA Coach Pitch Softball

## 8U Coach-Pitch

8/12/2020

The ordinary and basic rules of softball as prescribed by USSSA Softball, Inc. will apply regarding batters, batted balls, runners, force outs, tag outs, fly outs, ground balls, running the consecutive bases, and play in the field.

The following rules are expressly for NWRAA Coach Pitch Softball and supersede any USSSA Rules for regular league play. These rules are “working” rules and can be amended by the commissioner as needed and as the season progresses. The commissioner will be responsible for notifying all involved personnel of these changes. Keep in mind the spirit in which these rules are written and apply them with the same spirit in mind. Often common sense will solve all the problems that will arise. The ultimate rule is to teach every kid the fundamentals of the game, to participate fairly, and to enjoy the game while instilling the true meaning of sportsmanship.

### **Special Rule: (Commissioner Optional Rule – confirm if rules is being instated)**

**Overthrows** – Base runners will be allowed to advance 1 additional base on an overthrow ball.

**This rule only applies to the first thrown ball by an infielder.** The rule covers all bases including home plate. However, the base is not automatically awarded. The runner must reach the additional base safely. The defense will not be penalized for attempting to get the runner out. Once runners advance one base ‘play will end’ and timeout will be called

- 1) **Game Preliminaries** – A team must have a minimum of seven players to field an official team; otherwise the game is declared forfeiture by the violating team. Any player arriving late will be inserted at the end of the batting order immediately, without regard to game status. If forfeiture occurs teams will play a scrimmage game. The scrimmage game will be called after 1hr and 15 minutes from scheduled starting time (drop-dead; finish the batter–game ends, the inning does not have to be completed).
  - a) Official starting times for games are scheduled by the league. The commissioner retains the right to alter game times.
  - b) A team with less than ten players will not be penalized for open batting order slots (no automatic outs are assessed).
- 2) **Batting Lineup** - Every player on the roster and in attendance will be placed in the batting order (extended batting order). If a batter bats out of turn, the batter is out and will not bat again until the next trip through the batting order. The regular batting order shall be resumed beginning with the correct batter and through the order except for the batter which batted out of turn. The batter is not considered out of turn until he puts the ball in play or records an out. If the correction of the order is made during the at bat, the correct batter will start with the same pitch count as the incorrect batter.

- 3) Defensive Positioning** - Ten players on the defensive field. Infield is standard; the other four players are outfielders. If a team has only nine players, the nine basic positions of baseball must be filled. If a team has less than nine players, any of the standard baseball positions can be left vacant, except pitcher.
- a) **Infield Defensive Positions** - All infielders will play a normal infield position. The positions include pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, shortstop, and third base. The first baseman and second baseman will be positioned between 1st base and 2nd base. The shortstop and third baseman will be positioned between 2nd base and 3rd base. The pitcher shall have at least one (1) foot in the pitching circle when the pitch is thrown. The catcher will be positioned in a normal catching position.
  - b) **Outfield Defensive Positions** – 4 outfielders are permitted. The outfielders should be positioned no closer than ten feet from the baselines between first and second or second and third.
- 4) Fielder's Safety Masks** - All defensive players on the field must wear an official softball fielding mask.
- 5) Playing Time** - Players cannot sit out defensively 2 consecutive innings and cannot sit out more than 2 innings of any game. If one team has less than ten players available, the other team must play ten players if they are at the ballpark. The team with the proper number of players should not be penalized because the other team lacks ten players.
- 6) The Field**
- a) **Bases** - Will form a diamond shape and be 60 feet apart.
  - b) **Pitching Circle** - There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge at forty-two (42) feet from the rear point of home plate.
  - c) **Pitching Location** – The pitching coach shall keep one foot on the pitching-rubber when delivering the pitch (35' from the apex of the plate).
- 7) Defensive Substitutions** – There will be free substitution.
- 8) Batting** - The batter will receive five pitches or three swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. Each pitch will count as one of the five even if the batter does not swing. If the fifth pitch is hit (not bunted) foul the batter will remain at bat if they continue to foul off pitches.
- a) The batter is out after three swinging strikes or after five pitches.
  - b) There shall be no Base-on-Balls (walks) awarded.
  - c) Batters hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base.
  - d) No intentional walks.
  - e) **Bunting - Bunting is an option in USSSA Coach-Pitch Softball. if allowed it shall be done with the following provisions:**
    - i) A player may square to bunt and pull back. A batter **CAN NOT** square to bunt, pull back, and then either hit or bunt the ball. If the batter does this, they will be called out. Runners do not advance.
    - ii) A bunt that is fouled on the third strike or fifth pitch results in the batter being out.
- 9) Ending the Play** –

- a) **Having players calling time-out does not stop the play.** We want to discourage players from just simply getting the ball and immediately throwing their hands up and calling time-out to stop play
- b) After the ball is placed in play by a batter, the play will continue until the “lead” runner is stopped or submits to the defense. The lead runner is defined as the closest base runner to home plate than has not crossed home plate. The infielder does not need to call timeout to end the play. The umpire will call timeout once play ends.
  - i) If a runner is more than halfway to the next base when timeout is called, the runner will be awarded the next base. If they are not halfway to the next base when time is called, they will be returned to the previous base.
- c) **USSSA Coach Pitch Softball** allows play to stop if the ball is returned to the pitcher (player not coach) with at least one foot inside pitcher’s circle. The umpire will call timeout once play ends.
  - i) **Runners will be allowed to advance to the next base even if they are not halfway. Runners must be attempting to advance during the play. The base is not automatically awarded.**

**10) Maximum Runs Scored** - The maximum number of runs that can be scored per team, per inning is seven (6). In the case of a batter hitting a home run, let the player be credited with hitting a home run, but still only count runs up to seven per inning.

**11) Inning Definition** – Each team will bat until they reach three outs, or the maximum runs scored in their half inning.

**12) Ending the game** - Six innings will constitute an official game. There will, however, be a time limit of 1 hour and 15 minutes. No new inning will start after the time limit has been reached.

- a) Regular season games may end in a tie. Regular season scores are not recorded, and team win/loss records are not kept.

**13) Ending the game early** - In the event that the home team cannot possibly catch up or pass the score of the visiting team when it is time to play the last half of the last inning, and the rule regarding the minimum number of innings played by each player has been satisfied. The game will be called if time limit has expired. If the minimum number of innings played by a player has not been reached, the home team should play the last half inning.

**14) Run rule** - There is no run rule. The game will be played until the time is up or 6 innings has been played.

**15) Defensive Coaches** – Two (2) defensive coaches will be allowed within the boundaries of the “field of Play”. These coaches are to be positioned behind the outfielders. These coaches may offer advice to the defensive players. Coaches cannot interfere with the ball or contact players. Intentional interference will result in the awarding of an extra base for each base runner.

- a) **Defensive Coach Struck by Ball** - If the coach in the outfield is unintentionally struck by the ball, he is considered a part of the “fair Playing Field” if he is within the confines of the foul lines.

**16) Offensive Coaches** - There can be three offensive coaches on the “Field of Play”: pitcher, first base coach, and third base coach. The offensive pitcher must leave the field when the ball is in play and make every effort not to be a part of the play (he should attempt to remove the bat if possible while observing).

- a) **Pitching coach** may only coach the batter prior to the pitch. He/she may not coach the batter-runner at ANY time.
- b) **Pitching Coach Struck by the Ball** - The offensive pitcher will not be considered a part of the “Fair” playing surface. If the coach is unintentionally struck by the ball, it is a dead ball and not considered one of the five pitches. If the pitcher is forced to catch the ball in order to avoid bodily harm, that pitch is not counted and will be re-played. However, if the umpire determines that the pitcher purposely interfered with the flight of the ball, the batter will be called out and all runners will return to the positions that they occupied before the play started. Any knee pads or equipment taken on the field by the pitching coach are considered part of his body. If the equipment is struck, it is treated the same as if coach was struck by the ball. If in the umpire’s judgment, a coach interferes intentionally with the play, the batter will be called out and all runners will return to their original positions.

**17) Sportsmanship** - No player or coach may make gestures or noises that may result in mental or emotional harm or discomfort to a member of an opposing team, the umpires, or any spectator. Violation will result in ejection for the remainder of the game and reported to the disciplinary committee. Second offenses in the same game by other members of the team will result in forfeiture of the game. Violations of this rule in subsequent games by the same perpetrators will be more severe and will be carried out by the disciplinary committee. The committee reserves the right to deal with each offense as they deem necessary.

### **Safety Rules**

1. Players should not be allowed to climb on the fence material that protects the dugout area, an adult should supervise them.
2. Don’t let players stray from the field or the dugout area between innings. Keep them on the field or in the dugout during the complete course of the game, except in extenuating circumstances.
3. No offensive player may be within the confines of the playing area, outside of the dugout, without a batting helmet.
4. No head-first sliding. No head-first sliding is allowed. The player who head-first slides will be called out.

### **The Scoreboard and Field Maintenance**

1. The visiting team must provide an adult to operate the scoreboard during the game. The visiting team will also be responsible for obtaining, connecting, and then returning the electronic device that controls the scoreboard. The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook and to keep both teams score in the scorebook. Each team will supply a game ball.

2. It will be the home team's responsibility to perform any pre-game maintenance to the field to put it in playing condition. This should be completed at least 15 minutes prior to game time.
3. It will be the visiting teams' responsibility to rake and/or drag the infield dirt area and generally put the field back into playing condition after a game is completed.
4. Each team is required to clean their dugout and stands after use.

#### **Other Rules and Procedures**

1. Every team is required to rake or drag the field after practice.
2. Game Protests. There will be no game protest allowed.
3. There is to be no batting practice before a game on the playing field.
4. Infield practice is not allowed. Fielding practice can be done in the outfield.
5. Soft toss or batting against fencing is not allowed.
6. There should be no more than four coaches, including the head coach and an adult helper in the dugout, within the confines of the ball field (within the chain link fence).
7. The head coach is responsible for all representatives of his teams.