

# J Softball LEAGUE RULES

*Revised 10/2020*

J Softball is the proud successor to the Girls Club of Johnson County Softball League which provided recreational and instructional softball to children in Johnson County for 50 years. J Softball is a part of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and is administered by the J's Sports and Recreation Department.

J Softball emphasizes instruction and sportsmanship. The rules are adjusted from year to year to best accomplish these goals.

The foundation for the J Softball rules is the **Official USA Softball Rule** book. In some cases, the *Official ASA Softball Rules* have been modified or clarified, and these changes are included here. The *spirit* of the rules, not the strict adherence to the "letter of the law," should guide managers, coaches, and umpires.

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## A. General Information

1. J Softball is a recreational youth sports league administered by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City (The J). Information on divisions, fees, etc., is available on our website at [jsportskc.com](http://jsportskc.com).
2. The J's Sports and Recreation Department staff has the responsibility for all aspects of the J Softball program including, but not limited to, coordination of team formation, player registration, and player team assignments.
3. Managers (head coaches) and assistant coaches are responsible for supervision of players during practices and games. There should be at least two responsible adults, with transportation available for emergencies, at each team event.
4. Game RAIN OUT LINE – **(913) 543-5240**. Text and Email notifications are available. Sign up at [www.jsportskc.com](http://www.jsportskc.com) to learn about rainouts, field conditions, and other cancellations. Coaches are responsible for determining rainouts for practices.
5. Special Division specific rules can be found at the end of this document.

## B. Registration, Divisions and Rosters

1. All registrations are handled online through the website [jsportskc.com](http://jsportskc.com). ASA membership is NOT a requirement for participation in J Softball.
2. J Softball accepts full and partial teams as well as individual free agent registrations.
3. Divisions within J Softball are grade based. Players may play up a grade at their discretion. Playing down a grade requires league approval. The league reserves the right to combine grade divisions if necessary.
4. Divisions are as follows:
  - a. Pre-K: Coed T-Ball
  - b. Kindergartners: Coach Pitch
  - c. First graders: Junior 1
  - d. Second Graders: Junior 2
  - e. Third Graders: Junior 3
  - f. Fourth Graders: Senior 4
  - g. Fifth Graders: Senior 5
  - h. Sixth Graders: Senior 6
  - i. Seventh/Eighth Graders: Senior 7/8
5. Coach Pitch and Junior 1 divisions both use the coach pitch format. The Junior 2 and Junior 3 divisions use a machine pitch format. All senior divisions are kids pitch.
6. Roster size restrictions are as follows. Teams may go beyond the maximum by their choice, but the league will not force teams to add free agents above the minimum.

| Minimum | Maximum |
|---------|---------|
| 12      | 16      |

7. All players register individually and indicate either their coaches name if they are a part of an existing team; or “free agent” if they would like to be placed on a team. Teammate requests are accepted.
8. unless otherwise approved in advance by J staff. players may play for only one team within the league,

## C. Sportsmanship and Conduct

1. Managers and coaches are expected to set proper examples of sportsmanship and help control the conduct of parents and fans of their team. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and fans.
2. The umpires and J Staff have the authority and responsibility to control games. An umpire may remove any manager, coach, player or spectator if their conduct is deemed inappropriate or abusive.
3. Each team should have one designated representative in charge at games. This individual adult **will be the only member of that team to meet with the umpires during the game to discuss calls or other situations.**
4. A coach should not yell any word or phrase such as “strike” or “out” in place of (or at a higher volume than) the umpire, nor should a coach yell “balk” or “time” to force a balk. These are umpire calls and are not to be made by the coaches. Failure to comply with this policy may result in ejection from the game.
5. Coaches, players and spectators may not direct any chatter or other verbal or physical gestures towards the other team or specific opposing players that in any way may be deemed by the umpire or J staff as unsportsmanlike or an attempt to distract. Failure to comply with this policy may result in ejection from the game.
6. During games, players should remain in the bench area when they are not on the playing field. Only the batter and the on-deck batter are allowed to handle or swing bats during the course of a game. For the safety of the on-deck batter, teams have the option of using the opposing team’s on-deck circle (so that the on-deck batter is always to the back of the batter). The on-deck batter **MUST** wear a batting helmet. Managers should instruct on-deck batters on how to avoid contact with the ball and on how to avoid interference.
7. Once a game has begun, there will be no **throwing or catching practice** outside the field of play, except for one Senior Division pitcher per team at a time, who is under the direct supervision of a coach.
8. The **throwing of bats** will not be tolerated in J Softball. On the 1<sup>st</sup> offense the batter will receive a warning. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense by the same batter in the same game, the batter will be called out. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense by the same batter in the same game, the batter will be ejected from the game.
9. **Participation in J Softball may be revoked** at the sole and exclusive discretion of the J for cause or violation of League rules. In addition, players may be suspended or expelled from the league for inappropriate behavior or to protect the safety of other players, volunteers and/or umpires.

## D. Coaches

1. All managers and coaches must agree to abide by the *J Softball Coaches’ Code of Conduct*.
2. Violations of the *Coaches’ Code of Conduct* will be grounds for disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may include warnings, suspension, or removal from the program. Disciplinary actions may be appealed to the J Director of Fitness and Sports.
3. (Summer Only) Unless an exception has been approved by J staff, **Managers and coaches must wear the team shirt (when provided) in order to be on the field and in the dugout at games.**
4. No more than 5 coaches (including the manager) may be in the dugout and/or on the field during a game. Coaches must be at least 18 years old.

- Unless stated otherwise in the division specific rules that follow, one coach from the defensive team may be on the field during play but should be within three feet of the dugout during play. The offensive team may only have the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches on the field during play.

## E. Umpires

- The Junior Division will have one assigned umpire who is responsible for making all calls during the game.
- The Senior Divisions will have two umpires: one assigned behind the plate and one in the field.
- Umpires are responsible for reporting the results of each game to the J staff within 24-hours after the completion of the game. Results and division standings will be posted on the League website- [www.jsporktskc.com](http://www.jsporktskc.com)
- Umpires will be selected, trained, scheduled, and supervised by J staff. The J may also choose to contract for umpire services.
- The league expects coaches, players and fans to give umpires their full support and respect.** Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and fans. Poor sportsmanship may lead to disciplinary action by the League.
- An umpire’s decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out is final (unless this decision involves a miss application of a rule as determined upon appeal-see #7 below). No manager, coach, or player shall object to judgment decisions.
- Possible miss-interpretation of the rules by an umpire can be challenged by the designated team representative at the time of the occurrence. The representative should ask for a time out and approach the umpire in a civil manner. Consultation with J staff will take place as needed. Play will resume after the decision of the umpire(s)/J Staff.

## F. Equipment

- Team equipment** is provided by the League. Managers should arrange to pick up all team equipment before the season and return equipment after the season. Contact J staff for any repairs or replacement for team equipment that is damaged or unsafe.
- The League provides **team jerseys and hats/visors** that are to be worn in an appropriate manner for all games. Unless an exception has been approved by J staff, current year uniforms must be worn by all players.
- Softball appropriate **shorts/pants** are required for players beginning in the Jr 1 Division.
- Tennis shoes or molded cleats** are mandatory for all games and practices. *No street type shoes or metal cleats are allowed.*
- All batters, runners, on-deck batters, and players serving as base coaches **MUST** wear a batting helmet and the Junior Division pitcher/fielder position (located next to the pitching machine) **MUST wear a batting helmet with face mask** while on the field.
- All **catchers MUST wear full protective gear** consisting of at least helmet/face mask, chest protector, and knee to foot shin guards.
- Game balls are provided by the League for each game. An umpire or league official will make sure game balls are at the field for games. Practice balls are not to be used in games, except at the discretion of the umpire.

| CP      | JR 1 – SR 4 | SR4/SR5 – SR7/8 |
|---------|-------------|-----------------|
| 9” Ball | 11” Ball    | 12” Ball        |

9. Players in all Divisions must use approved softball metal **type bats** except that T-ball bats are permitted through Junior 2. No wood or baseball bats are allowed. Any player putting a ball in play with an illegal bat will be called "Out." Players caught using an illegal bat prior to putting a ball in play will be required to switch to a legal bat.

## G. Turf Field Rules

In addition to all regular League rules, games played on one of the J's turf fields will have the following additional rules:

1. No chewing gum
2. No shelled seeds or nuts
3. Nothing spiked into the turf
4. No food or drinks allowed on the field except water; sports drinks and snacks may be used in the dugout

## H. Playing Field Dimensions

|                              | <u>Coach Pitch</u><br>JR1 | <u>Junior</u><br>2 | <u>Junior</u><br>3 | <u>Senior</u><br>4 & 4/5 | <u>Senior</u><br>5 & 6 | <u>Senior</u><br>7 / 8 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Home to 1 <sup>st</sup> Base | 50'                       | 55'                | 60'                | 60'                      | 60'                    | 60'                    |
| Home to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Base | 70' 8.5"                  | 77' 8"             | 84' 10"            | 84' 10"                  | 84' 10"                | 84' 10"                |
| Home to Pitching Rubber      | 25'                       | 30'                | 30'                | 30'                      | 35'                    | 40'                    |

Base distances shall be marked from the backs of the bases. The pitching distance is measured from the front of the pitching rubber to the back of home plate. For the Junior Division, Home to the Pitching Machine should be measured from the front leg of the pitching machine.

## I. Player Participation

1. Every player in uniform should play at least half of the innings in the field during the game. Exceptions will be made for injuries or discipline problems, and the manager should discuss these situations with the player, her parents, and the opposing manager.
2. There will be a **continuous batting order** of all eligible players (*i.e.* if there are 12 players at a game there will be a batting order of 1 through 12) regardless of fielding positions. If a player shows up late for a game, that player goes to the bottom of the order. If a player discontinues playing during a game, her spot will be skipped with no penalties assessed. Both scorekeepers should be informed when this occurs. Fielding substitutions do not change the batting order.
3. There will be **free substitutions** of players in fielding positions, but each player must maintain her spot in the batting order. There is no limitation on how many fielding positions a player may play during a game.
4. If a batter or **runner is injured**, the last player making an out may run for the injured player, but if a player is pulled for a pinch runner, he/she may not return to the lineup without umpire approval. Coaches should discuss this with the umpire at the time.
5. With two outs, teams are encouraged to use a pinch runner for their catcher. The pinch runner should be the last player to have made an out in the inning.

## J. Home Team, Visiting Team, and Scorekeepers

1. Refer to the official game schedule for Home and Visiting team assignments. **Home team will occupy the first base bench/dugout.**
2. The Home team may take **infield practice** first before a game, for a maximum of 5 minutes. The Visiting team may then take infield practice for up to 5 minutes. This order may be reversed by mutual agreement of the coaches. Umpires may limit the time of infield practice, if necessary, to keep games running on time.
3. Each team must designate a **scorekeeper** who is familiar with the rules of softball and of scoring a game. The scorekeeper shall use the scorebooks provided to each manager by the league or other acceptable methods. Prior to each game, the manager (or scorekeeper) will provide the team's continuous batting order for the game to the opposing team.

## K. Game Duration, Maximum Runs per Inning, "Mercy Rule"

1. **A game is considered complete** after six innings or the allotted game time per division, whichever comes first, with the exceptions noted below. Below is the game duration for each division:

|             | <u>Coach Pitch</u><br><u>Junior 1</u> | <u>Junior 2</u> | <u>Junior 3</u><br><u>Senior 4/5/6</u> | <u>Senior</u><br><u>7 / 8</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Game Length | 60 mins<br>or 5 innings               | 75 mins         | 90 mins                                | 90 mins                       |

2. The umpires shall be responsible for **keeping track of the official game time**. The umpire shall announce to both teams the actual start time of the game at the first pitch.
3. If an inning or half inning has begun before the allotted time has passed, then that **inning or half inning will be completed**.
4. No new inning (the top of an inning) will start with **5 minutes or less** remaining on the game clock. (NOTE: An inning or half inning begins at the exact time that the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is made in the previous half inning.)
5. A **maximum number of runs** shall be counted in any one-half inning. After the max number of runs has been scored in a half inning, the half inning shall be complete (NOTE: the half inning is complete at the exact time the final run to meet the max run rule crosses the plate. Any additional runners that might score as the result of a play in progress will *not* be counted).

|   | <u>Coach Pitch</u><br><u>Junior 1</u> | <u>Junior</u><br><u>2 &amp; 3</u> | <u>Senior</u><br><u>4-8</u> |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Max # of<br>Runs Allotted<br>per ½ Inning | No score<br>kept                      | 6                                 | 6                           |

1. **A game is considered complete** if after 3 innings a team is ahead by 13 or more runs. By mutual consent of the Managers, games may be continued until time has expired. Below is the mercy rule for each division:

|            | <u>Coach Pitch</u><br><u>Junior 1</u> | <u>Junior</u><br><u>2 &amp; 3</u> | <u>Senior</u><br><u>4 &amp; 8</u> |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mercy Rule | None                                  | 13                                | 13                                |

7. A game is considered complete when **stopped by the umpire for weather or darkness** if 2½ innings have been played and the Home team is ahead, or if 3 innings have been

played and the Visiting team is ahead. Games that do not meet these criteria will be suspended by the umpire (see **Section L. Game Suspensions and Weather Cancellations** below).

8. **Tiebreaker rule:** If the game is tied after all innings have been completed (or at the time limit), the tie-breaker rule will go into effect. At the start of each half inning, each team will put the batter who completed the last at bat in the previous inning on second base and start with one out. Only one inning will be played using the tie-breaker rule. The game will be considered a tie if after one inning the game is still tied. In tournament play games will continue until a winner is determined.

## **L. Game Suspensions and Weather Cancellations**

1. Whenever possible, **weather cancellations** will be made before the start of a game. These will be posted to the RAIN OUT LINE – **(913) 543-5240** and on the website [www.jsportskc.com](http://www.jsportskc.com).
2. If weather conditions warrant, J staff, or the umpire(s), if J staff is not present, may **delay the start of a game**.
3. After a game has begun, J staff or the umpire(s) may **suspend the game** if weather or field conditions warrant. The umpire(s) will stop play, and the exact game situation will be recorded. (The suspended game will resume exactly as it ceased). J staff or the umpire(s) will decide whether to suspend the game temporarily (e.g. if a brief thunderstorm halts play), or indefinitely (if it appears that weather conditions/field conditions will not improve so that a game can be played in the time allotted). Although J staff/the umpire(s) may consult with the managers of both teams, the decision to suspend the game indefinitely is that of J staff or the umpire(s).
4. All suspended or cancelled games will be reported to J staff. Determinations will be made for rescheduling these games by J staff.

### **Special Weather Note for Practices:**

Please err on the side of caution in severe weather. Practices should be stopped immediately when lightning is spotted and/or thunder is heard. Adults should take steps to provide shelter to all children present.

Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of storms because people wait too long before seeking shelter or after storms because people return outside too soon. Play it safe.

## **M. Forfeits**

A game shall be declared a forfeit if a team cannot field **at least 7 roster players** within 15 minutes after the scheduled start time. A practice game may be played, but the team with the required number of players on hand will be awarded a 2-0 forfeit victory.

## **N. Field Boundaries**

1. If appropriate fencing is not present, then the “backstop extension imaginary lines” run parallel to the first and third baselines and constitute the legal playing field.
2. If a fair or live ball remains in the legal playing field, runners may advance any number of bases until the ball is returned to the pitcher or pitcher/fielder position player and the play is declared dead, or until the umpire calls “Time.” (*Modified for Junior Divisions*)

3. A live ball that enters another field of play remains live unless touched by a fielder from the other field, in which case, the ball is dead and the batter/runner and all other runners are awarded three bases from their starting base.
4. On overthrows that go out of the legal playing field or under or over the backstop fence, ASA Softball rules apply *i.e.* runners are awarded the base they are going to plus one additional base.
5. In the Senior Divisions, pitched balls follow the same rules as overthrows in Rule N.4. above.
6. On foul fly balls a defensive player may put a player out by catching the ball while standing on the “in play” side of the legal playing field and reaching across the line or fence.

## O. Base Path Rules

1. A defensive player may not alter the path of a runner, unless the defensive player is making a play on a batted ball.
2. Whenever a tag play is evident (*a close play*), a runner must slide or seek **to avoid contact** with the fielder and/or catcher. Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and/or catcher is not interpreted as seeking to avoid contact. If a play is not evident, obstruction will be called on a fielder that impedes the progress of a runner.
3. If a runner directly interferes with a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the umpire will immediately call “Time,” and the runner will be called “Out.”
4. If another person on the batter’s team interferes with a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the batter/runner will be called “Out.” This most commonly occurs when an on-deck batter fails to move out from under a fly ball.
5. Batters cannot interfere with a catcher attempting to make a play, which includes throwing the ball. Per rule 6.03 (a) (3), “A batter is out for illegal action when he interferes with the catcher’s fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter’s box or making any other movement that hinders the catcher at home plate. Thus, when a player is attempting to steal, the batter should attempt to move out of the catcher’s way. If the batter interferes with the catcher’s throw, the umpire may call “Interference,” and the batter may be called “Out.” In this case any advancement by runners is nullified.
6. Managers/coaches should teach all defensive players how to play their base paths and bases. For example, first basemen should not stand on top of the base, but rather on the corner and lean in toward the infield when holding a runner on base or receiving a throw from an infielder. All fielders and catchers *awaiting* a ball for a play at their base may not obstruct the runner’s path to the base.
7. All runners when sliding, **MUST slide “feet first”** when **advancing** to a base or home plate. Runners using a head first slide will be called out. Players returning to a base from a “lead off” position, may return to their base by diving head first. Defensive players must not “decoy” or “fake” a play at their base in order to cause a runner to slide. Such actions may result in a player being ejected.

## P. Specific Field Considerations

1. Utility Lines: If a batted fly-ball strikes any utility lines that run across a field (*e.g.* at FoxHill or other city parks), the ball is *still in play and shall be ruled fair or foul according to standard softball rules*.
2. In games played on fenced fields, ASA League rules shall apply regarding home runs, ground rule doubles, etc. A batted ball that goes over the fence in the air is a home run; one that bounces over is a ground-rule double, etc.

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3. In games played on fields without fences, balls that enter an unplayable area within the field of play, shall be governed by local ground rules as explained to team managers by the umpire prior to the first pitch.

# APPENDIX

## SPECIAL RULES FOR COACH PITCH DIVISION AND JUNIOR 1 DIVISION

### CP. A. General Rules

1. Scores are not kept.
2. The team coaches will serve as umpires.
3. Outs are not kept. The full line-up bats each half inning.
4. Games will be 1 hour in duration.

### CP. B. Playing Field Dimensions

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Home to 1 <sup>st</sup> base:       | 50'    |
| Home to 2 <sup>nd</sup> base:       | 70'8.5 |
| Home to Pitcher (Manager or Coach): | 25' *  |

\* No specific distance, but about 25' is suggested so that batters can develop timing for pitches.

### CP.C. Players and Positions

Regular softball positions, *except*:

1. The pitcher and catcher shall be coaches from the batting team; they will not become involved in any plays once the ball is put in play.
2. The defensive team shall have a "pitcher-fielder" who shall play the defensive position normally played by the pitcher. The pitcher-fielder should position herself before each pitch, approximately three feet to the side and two to three feet behind the "coach-pitcher." The pitcher-fielder is responsible for covering home on plays at the plate. The defensive team stops a play when the ball is returned to the pitcher-fielder or after the batter is put out or successfully reaches base; any runners less than halfway to the next base are returned to the previous base (unless it is already occupied). *The pitcher-fielder is required to wear a batting helmet with faceguard for protection.*
3. The defensive team may have additional players in the field. One positioned near and second base (a second shortstop) and the remainder of the roster positioned in the outfield.
4. If a team is short on players, they may borrow players from the other team to play in the field. These players will still bat for their own team.

### CP.D. Batting

1. Managers should use a continuous batting order. Every player on the team must be in the batting order and bat each inning.
2. An inning does not end after three outs. Players making an out shall remain on base. Coaches should announce to the other team when their last batter is batting.
3. No base on balls (walks) will be issued.
4. Players have five swings to put the ball in play. If unsuccessful, a batting tee will be used by the player to put the ball in play.
5. No bunts will be permitted.
6. No bat throwing will be allowed. Coaches are encouraged to work with players who may have difficulty with this.
7. Batting helmets must be worn by all batters.

### **CP.E. Base Running**

1. The Batter/Runner may run to first base on a ball hit in the infield and up to second base on a ball hit into the outfield. Coaches are encouraged not to be overly aggressive on the bases.
2. Runners may not advance an extra base on overthrows.
3. No steals or leadoffs will be permitted.
4. Batting helmets must be worn by all base runners.
5. Runners may leave their base once the ball is put into play by the batter.

### **CP.F. The Game**

A game is considered complete after five innings or 1 hour, whichever comes first. A game being stopped due to weather or field conditions In the event of 2 innings will constitute a complete game.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR JUNIOR 2 AND JUNIOR 3 DIVISIONS ONLY

### Jr. A: Number of Fielders

|                       | <u>Junior 2</u> | <u>Junior 3</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Catcher               | optional        | Yes             |
| Pitcher/Fielder       | Yes             | Yes             |
| Number of Infielders  | 4               | 4               |
| Number of Outfielders | 5               | 5               |
| Total                 | 11<br>w/catcher | 11              |

All outfielders must be positioned at least 10 feet beyond the base path so there is a distinct separation between infielders and outfielders.

**Jr. B:** The manager or a coach of the offensive team will operate the **pitching machine**. Pitching machine speeds are set at different speeds for the different Junior Divisions. Small adjustments to speed and height are allowed, as long as these are approved by the umpire. The pitching machine operator may not catch or deliberately alter the course of any ball in play. He/she may receive the ball from any defensive player or from the umpire during any dead ball situation.

|                                     | <u>Junior 2</u> | <u>Junior 3</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Pitching Machine Distance to Plate* | 30ft            | 30ft            |

\*measured from the front leg of the machine

- Jr. C:** The **pitcher/fielder position** player (batting helmet with mask required) must be no closer to home plate than the front of the pitching machine and must play on either the first base or third base side, approximately 3 feet away from the machine.
- Jr. D** (1) In the Junior 2 and 3 Divisions, batter/runners and runners making outs will return to the dugout.  
 (2) In the junior 2 and 3 Divisions, teams will bat until either three outs are recorded or six runs are scored, whichever occurs first.
- Jr. E:** **Hit balls striking the pitching machine** or the pitching machine operator prior to a fielder touching the ball will be ruled an automatic single. All runners will advance one base.
- Jr. F:** **“Live” thrown balls striking the pitching machine** or the pitching machine operator remain “live.” The operator must make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with the ball, and he/she must avoid hindering any fielder attempting to make a play. If the operator has made no such effort, the umpire will call offensive interference.
- Jr. G:** **Strikeouts:** Each batter will get a maximum number of hittable pitches, as ruled by the umpire, who should indicate “last pitch” on the last pitch. If the last pitch is ruled hittable then the batter is out unless the ball is hit into play. Batters will receive additional hittable pitches if a foul occurs on their last hittable pitch until the ball is hit in play, a strikeout occurs, or a hittable pitch goes by without a swing. A standard “3 swings” (4 swings for Junior 2) strikeout prior to the max number of hittable pitches will also result as an out. If a batter swings at a pitch, the pitch will be considered hittable.

|                                     | <u>Junior 2</u> | <u>Junior 3</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Number of Hittable Pitches / Swings | 6 / 4           | 5 / 3           |

- Jr. H:** There is **no purposeful bunting** allowed in the Junior Divisions. A ball that is swung at and hit that only dribbles in front of the plate is playable.
- Jr. I:** There is **no “infield fly rule”** in the Junior Divisions. Runners advance at their own risk. Purposeful dropping of infield pop-ups should not be encouraged by the coaches.
- Jr. J:** There are **no lead offs or base stealing** in the Junior Divisions. There will be no leadoffs or advancement on wild pitches or passed balls. **A runner cannot leave the base until the ball is hit.** The umpire may call a runner out if a base is left early.
- Jr. K:** **Play is over when the ball is secured by an infielder (on the infield).** Once the ball is secured by an infielder or otherwise ruled a dead ball by the umpire, runners will be awarded the next base if they are more than halfway towards the next base or will have to return to the last base touched if they are less than halfway towards the next base. The defensive team may, however, make a play (legally on the runner attempting to advance, prior to the call of time or dead ball by the umpire) in which case live ball rules will apply.
- Jr. L:** **Overthrows** – an overthrow is a ball that is thrown to an infielder in the infield area that is not secured. When an overthrow occurs, the umpire will raise one hand in the air signifying to both teams that an overthrow has occurred.
1. There will only be one base advancement on any overthrow even if the ball remains in play; and the runner advances at her own risk.
  2. There will only be one overthrow per at bat. If a second overthrow occurs during the same at bat, the ball will become dead and all runners will return to the base they occupied following the first overthrow.
- (EXAMPLE: Batter runner is trying to stretch a single into a double. The defense overthrows second base and the runner attempts to advance to third base. The defense overthrows third base. The runner may not advance and must remain at third base).*
- Jr. M:** First- and third-base coaches should assist the umpire by **signaling “Fair” and “Foul” balls**. With only one umpire, it is often not possible for the umpire to make it to the base lines in time to determine where a ball may land. The final decision, however, on fair or foul balls will be up to the umpire.
- Jr. N:** A **pitched ball that hits a batter** shall be ruled as an unhittable pitch unless the ball is in the strike zone in which case it shall count as one of the batter’s allotted hittable pitches.
- Jr. O:** In the Junior Divisions, five coaches (including the manager) may be in the dugout or on the field during a game while a team is up to bat (one on the pitcher’s mound, one at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and one or more to supervise the bench). For Junior 2 and 3, two coaches may be allowed to stand in the outfield to assist the fielders on proper positioning.
- Jr. P:** In Junior games without a player as catcher, a coach serves as the catcher but does not make plays on a live ball. In Junior games with a player as catcher, a coach should be at the backstop to help retrieve pitched balls that get by the catcher.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR SENIOR DIVISIONS ONLY

### Sr. A: Maximum Innings Pitched

- (1) In the **Senior 4 - 6** Divisions, pitchers may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in a game or 4 innings in a 24-hour period.
- (2) In the **Senior 7/8** Division, pitchers may pitch a maximum of 4 innings in a game or 5 innings in a 24-hour period.
- (3) One pitch to a batter in an inning constitutes an inning pitched by that pitcher. Innings pitched do not have to be consecutive.

**Sr. B:** A manager is only allowed one **visit to the mound** per pitcher per inning. A pitcher must be replaced on the second visit to the mound in an inning. A visit to a pitcher while she is warming up on the mound for an inning constitutes a visit. It is not considered a visit to check on a potential injury situation.

**Sr. C:** The only **types of pitches** that may be thrown are fastballs and change-ups. The umpire can disqualify a pitcher from further pitching in that game for intentional junk pitches.

**Sr. D:** **Supplemental pitching rules and guidelines can be found at the end of this document.**

**Sr. E: Hit Batters** - If a pitcher hits a total of 3 batters in any game, that pitcher will be removed from pitching for the rest of that game. If an umpire rules that a pitcher intentionally hits or flagrantly attempts to hit a batter, that pitcher will be removed from pitching for the rest of that game, and J staff will be notified by the umpire. Two such occurrences by the same pitcher could result in permanent suspension of pitching privileges. If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball. A batter, who in the opinion of the umpire, intentionally tries to be hit by a pitch will not be awarded first base and the umpire will call the pitch a ball or a strike based on location. NOTE: A pitched ball that strikes the ground first and then hits a batter is still considered to have hit the batter and he/she is awarded first base, but this will NOT count as one of the three hit batters referenced above.

**Sr. F:** Umpires shall allow pitchers up to **five on field warm-up pitches** before an inning and for new pitchers entering the game during an inning.

**Sr. G: Bunting** is allowed in the Senior Division. Bunting a foul 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is an out.

**Sr. H: A foul tip** (a ball which hits the bat and is caught by the catcher before touching the ground without going higher than the batter's head) is a live ball and the remains in play. Runners attempting to steal on a foul tip may advance or be put out but do not have to return to their original base before advancing. A ball that hits the bat and then the ground before being caught by the catcher is a foul ball which is a dead ball.

**Sr. I:** The **infield fly rule** will only apply for the Senior 5, 6 and 7/8 Divisions. When runners are on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base or the bases are loaded, each with less than two outs and a batted ball is popped up in fair territory and is judged to be a routine play for an infielder, the umpire can declare "INFIELD FLY, BATTER'S OUT," and the runners can advance at their own risk. To be clear, if an infield fly is called, runners may but do not have to advance on an uncaught batted ball. The umpire should call the infield fly loudly and quickly, but whether or not to make the call is the umpire's discretion.

### Sr. J: Base stealing:

- (1) **In all Senior Divisions**, players may only leave the base once the ball leaves the Pitchers hand,
- (2) Stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base is allowed **in all Senior Divisions**, but stealing home is prohibited.

**Sr. K: Runners cannot steal home** on a pitch. Runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> base may leave the base as described in Sr. J above and advance a maximum of one-half the distance to home on the pitch.

- (1) **In the Senior 4-6 Divisions**, runners may NOT try to advance home on an overthrow from the catcher to the pitcher.
- (2) **In the Senior 7/8 Divisions**, runners may try to advance home if the pitcher does not catch the return throw from the catcher.
- (3) **In all Senior Divisions**, runners may try to advance home if the catcher throws to anyone other than the pitcher.
- (4) **In the Senior 7/8 Division ONLY**, a runner may try to advance home from third base once the pitch is no longer hittable and uncaught i.e. a wild pitch or passed ball. The only exception is that in the Senior 5 and 6 and 5/6 Divisions, a runner at third with the bases loaded and two outs, may attempt to advance to home on a dropped third strike. This is a force out situation at home (See SR N below)

**Sr. L:** Delay of game must be avoided by the catcher walking the ball out to the pitcher or the pitcher walking in to receive the ball from the catcher.

**Sr. M:** **Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strikes by the catcher in the Senior 4 or 4/5 Divisions** are still official strike outs, and the batter cannot attempt to run to 1<sup>st</sup> base. Other runners can advance at their own risk to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

**Sr. N:** **For the Senior 5/6 & 7/8 Divisions**, a batter will become a runner on an **uncaught third strike**, providing that first base is unoccupied when there are less than two outs, or even if first base is occupied when there are two outs. If the bases are loaded with two out and the catcher does not make a legal catch of a third strike, a force play goes into effect because the batter has now become a runner. The catcher may step on home plate to force out the runner from third or tag the batter or throw to any other base. (Official Baseball Rules 6.05 and 6.09.)

**Sr. O:** **Intentional walks** may be issued by announcement of such upon entrance of the batter to the batter's box. No pitches are thrown.

**Sr. P:** In the Senior 4-6 Divisions, teams may have a **4<sup>th</sup> outfielder** and 10 total defensive players on the field.

# Supplemental Pitching Rules and Guidelines

ASA Pitching Regulations (abbreviated), meant as a guide to help coaches and players

## 1. Preliminaries

- A. Both feet must be on the ground within 24" length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders must be in line with first and third bases and both feet must be in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- B. The pitcher shall take the signal (or otherwise begin the pitching process) with both feet on the pitcher's plate, and with the hands separated, and the ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand.
- C. The ball shall be held in both hands for not less than one second and no more than 10 seconds before releasing.
- D. Both feet must remain in contact with the pitching plate at all times prior to the forward step.

## 2. Legal Delivery

- A. The pitcher must not use a motion in which, after the ball is held, the hands are separated and brought together again.
- B. The pitcher must not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.
- C. The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm in a windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill action.
- D. The pitcher must take one forward step with the non-pivot foot simultaneously with the release of the ball.
- E. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.
- F. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground.
- G. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball".

## 3. Penalties

- A. In the Senior 4 or 4/5 Divisions, if in the umpire's judgement, a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, the offensive team will have the choice of taking the result of the pitch or having the pitch declared a ball.
- B. In the Senior 5, 5/6 and 7/8 Divisions, if in the umpire's judgement, a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, the offensive team will have the choice of taking the result of the pitch; or with no runners on base having the pitch declared ball or with runners on base, the runners are advanced one base each.

## Special Pitching Rules for the Senior 4 and 4/5 Divisions

1. There will be no walks in the Senior 4 and 4/5 Divisions.
2. Each batter will face a player pitcher. If the player pitcher throws four (4) balls not in the strike zone to a batter, the batter will then receive up to three (3) additional pitches thrown by an offensive team's coach until the batter either puts the ball into play or strikes out. Strikes will be called on adult pitchers. A batter cannot end her at bat on a foul ball unless caught by a defensive player for an out. If the batter fails to put the ball in play after the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) coach pitch strike, the batter will be declared out.
3. The batter keeps the strike count when/if the coach comes into pitch.
4. The umpire is given the discretion to declare a pitch delivered by a coach pitcher as unhittable when it is not in the strike zone and when the batter does not swing at the pitch. Such a pitch is deemed a no pitch and is not counted as one of the additional coach pitches.
5. Coach pitchers must remain in the dugout unless they are pitching and be ready to enter the field immediately when the player pitcher has thrown four balls. The umpire will stop play to allow the coach pitcher to enter the playing field and take their position on the mound. No warm up pitches will be allowed. If the coach is not ready and the umpire feels this is a delay of game, the batter will be called out.
6. The coach pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate when delivering the pitch.
7. The player pitcher is to remain on the field off to the side of the coach pitcher and she is to receive all balls thrown back from the catcher or thrown in from the fielders. The ball is still considered a live ball and if the coach pitcher receives the ball, they could be called for interference. When a coach pitcher intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner, the ball is dead and the runner closest to home is out. Other runners, if any, must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.
8. If a batted ball strikes the coach pitcher, it is considered a dead ball and the batter is awarded first base and all other runners advance one base.