



## 2017 WEST LA LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL RULES

### THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES SHALL GOVERN PLAY, EXCEPT AS MODIFIED HEREIN

- These local rule modifications are for the regular season only. Special games tournaments during the regular season (e.g., a “border wars”) may have different rules, as may West LA league playoffs, TOC and All Stars.
- Teams should show up at least 45 minutes before game time. One hour for Majors.
- For interleague games, communicate with the visiting manager prior to the game day (by phone or at the field) confirm agreed rules for the game (e.g., any pitching restrictions, base stealing, bunting, etc.), then advise the umpire.
- **PREGAME:** For pregame warm up at West LA, teams should use the outfield (including the dirt portion) and batting cages (each team takes one). Don’t use the infield for warm up and tell the visiting teams the same. Do the Little League pledge 5 minutes before the start time, then the managers/umpire meeting.
- **BATTING ORDER/FREE DEFENSIVE SUBSTITUTION:** Teams will use a continuous batting order for the regular season -- all players in attendance are included in the batting order. There is free substitution of players on defensive positions including pitchers (pitchers may pitch, move to a different position and return to pitch).
- **NO MERCY RULE:** For regular season there is no mercy rule (due to the run caps each inning).
- **COACHES IN DUGOUT:** 2 adult base coaches may be used during the games, and **1 adult coach must always be in the dugout.** Teams may have a 4<sup>th</sup> coach in the dugout to keep things moving (and in minor games for coach pitching). All game coaches must have been authorized in advance.
- **FACE SHIELDS ON HELMETS:** Face shields must be worn on batting helmets in all divisions. Chin straps recommended but not required.

## **JUNIOR SOFTBALL**

- No special rules. 7 inning games, there is no time limit unless dictated by a field space constraint. Any limit shall be clarified before the game.

## **MAJOR SOFTBALL**

- **RUN LIMIT:** During the first 5 innings there is a 5 run cap. There is no limit to the number of runs in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning (or any extra inning). Every game shall have at least one open inning of unlimited runs, unless otherwise agreed by both managers in advance.
- **TIME LIMIT:** Major softball games have no time limit. Only if field space constraints require a time limit, and it appears there will not be time for a full 6 inning game, the managers and umpire shall consult and the umpire shall notify the managers at the beginning of the final inning that the 5 run rule has been waived and it's an open inning.
- **FIELDING POSITIONS:** Regular 9 player defense is used.

## **MINOR SOFTBALL**

- **FIELDING POSITIONS:** 10 players may be used on defense (4 outfielders).
- **LESS THAN 9 PLAYERS:** Minor softball games can be played with less than 9 players on a team. If a team does not have at least 9 players to begin the game, 1 or more players from the other team may be used on defense for the short team, though this is not necessary (teams may play with less than 3 outfielders). Pool players are also available. Teams should make every effort to play the game and not cancel. Umpires shall not cancel games for lack of players.
- **RUN LIMIT:** There is a 4 run cap each inning until the final inning, which has no run limit. Every game shall have at least 1 open inning of unlimited runs unless otherwise agreed by the managers in advance. It appears there will not be time for a full 6 inning game, the managers and umpire shall consult (as provided below) and the umpire shall notify the managers at the beginning of the final inning that the 4 run rule has been waived and it's an open inning.
- **TIME LIMIT:** No new inning shall start after 1 hour 40 minutes from the scheduled start time. Around the 1:15 to 1:30 point in the game, managers and the umpire should confer about the timing of the last inning (which will be an open inning unless the managers otherwise agreed in advance). Unless otherwise agreed by both managers and only if permitted by the home field schedule, there shall be a hard stop on the game at 2 hours from the scheduled start time. Try to get in at least 5 innings for all minor games.
- **PITCHING:** Players or coaches must pitch from 35 feet. **Players may not pitch in more than (3) innings per game.** No walks will be allowed **until April 15**. Until April 15, if the pitcher throws 4 pitches that are called balls, a

coach of the batter's team will pitch to the batter. If the batter does not hit a fair ball after 3 coach pitches, the batter is out. The batter will be allowed additional pitches from the coach pitcher if the third and subsequent pitches are hit foul. The coach will stand at the pitcher's plate. The player pitcher shall have at least one foot in the pitcher's circle when the coach pitcher pitches. No balls and strikes will be called on pitches from the coach pitcher. If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher, the ball is declared dead and no pitch will be counted. The coach pitcher shall not coach any base runners while the ball is in play. There is never stealing bases or bunting while the coach is pitching.

- Minor pitchers must wear a protective face mask while pitching.
- **STEALING:** Stealing shall be allowed with the following limitations **until April 15:** (A) runners may only steal second base and third base (stealing home starts April 15); (B) no runner shall advance more than 1 base on a steal after any 1 pitch and not more than 1 base per batter; and (C) no delayed steals -- the ball is dead when the catcher releases the throw back to pitcher. Starting April 15, these limitations are gone.
- **OVERTHROWS:** **Until April 15** a runner may only advance 1 base on an overthrow to a base that leaves the field of play (ball goes into foul territory). If the ball remains in fair territory on an overthrow, the runners may advance without restriction (except on a steal where the limit is one base per steal even on an overthrow to the base).
- **HIT BY PITCH:** If a batter is hit by a pitch, she may continue the at bat (pitch counts as a ball) or take first base (batting team's option).
- **BUNTING:** Bunting is not allowed on a coach pitch. Otherwise bunting is allowed all season.
- **INFIELD FLY:** Infield fly rule shall not be called.
- **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE:** Is not used in any minors game and will not be called.