

2024 FIVE STAR 8U SOFTBALL RULES

Approved for 2024

The National Federation of State High School Association's Rule Book will be the source of regulations governing play. However, these special rules override those rules when/if there is a conflict of rules.

A. FIELD DIMENSIONS and REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

1. Diamond dimensions: Bases – **55-60 feet**; Pitcher's Rubber – 28 feet.
2. An orange safety base is required at 1st base.
3. An 11" non-padded yellow softball will be used.
4. Batting helmets must include a mask and may not be removed until a player is behind the fence in foul territory.
5. Batter's safety lines need to be drawn on both sides of home plate, either in chalk or in the dirt. The lines will be placed parallel to and 6 inches away from home plate running a distance of 3 feet in front and 3 feet in back of the plate. Players must stay behind these lines while batting.
6. A 16-foot pitcher's circle drawn around the pitcher's rubber either in chalk or in the dirt is required.
7. Any girl playing the pitcher position must wear a fielder's protective mask. It is recommended that all fielders wear one, especially infielders, but only required for the pitcher.

B. MANAGER DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The home team shall set up the diamond including the bases and pitching rubber.
2. The home team shall supply 2 balls in good condition.
3. Both managers must discuss ground rules prior to the start of the game.
4. The home team will get the playing field for practice first. The visiting team will be given the field for warm up at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. If the field is late in being set up, the home team warm up time is penalized accordingly. The visiting team should always be given 15 minutes to warm up.
5. The home team will occupy the third base dugout.
6. Managers shall contact the opposing team manager when questionable weather or field conditions exist. The home team manager will decide if the game will be played or cancelled. The decision to cancel the game should be made one hour prior to the start time to allow for the opposing manager to contact his/her players.

C. GAME STRUCTURE

1. Game length – 4 innings.
2. Games will have a 1-hour and 45-minute time limit. **No new inning will begin after 1-hour and 30-minutes from the start of the game.**
3. The minimum number of players to start a game is 6. If a team does not have 6 players, players may be shared between teams.
4. A continuous batting order will be used. Once a team bats through its entire roster or gets three outs, whichever comes first, the side shall retire.
5. Players arriving late shall be inserted in the last position in the batting order. Players may be inserted at any time they arrive. There is no penalty for players arriving late or leaving early.
6. Two defensive coaches will be allowed in the outfield. They may not stand closer to the infield than an outfield player.
7. **The adult coach pitcher will come off the field when a player is pitching.**
8. **Umpires are required.**

D. GAME RULES

1. All players must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield and 1 inning in the outfield within the first 3 innings of the game. A player may not play more than 2 innings at the same position per game. **No player shall sit two consecutive innings.**
2. Players must play their own position. They may back up other positions or move when fielding a ball but must return to their original positions with each pitch.
3. Rolling the ball to record an out at any base will not be allowed.
4. The base path must be kept clear of defensive players except when they are attempting to make a play.
5. Outfielders must be at least 10 feet behind the baseline and cannot cover a base to accept a throw for an out.
6. **All infield hits, the batter and runners shall only advance one base at a time. (Station to Station rule)**
7. **On a hit to the outfield whether on a fly or on the ground runners may advance as many bases as possible until the ball is controlled in the pitcher's circle. If between bases, the baserunner may continue to the base they were actively running to as long as they were at least halfway before there was player control in the pitcher's circle. Any defensive player can control the ball in the pitcher's circle to stop the advancement of runners.**

8. The pitcher may not make a force out at any base, including home, by touching the base herself, unless she has fielded the ball ahead of the batter or runner. The pitcher may not chase a batter or runner to a base in an attempt to tag her out. She must throw the ball to the appropriate baseman unless she has fielded the ball ahead of the batter or runner and then may tag out the batter or runner as they advance towards her.
9. The infield fly rule is not in effect. Runners may advance at their own risk.
10. Bunting is allowed off live player pitching only. Fake bunting and swinging are illegal.
11. A batter that is struck by a pitch, will complete her at bat (No walks). If a batter is injured and cannot complete her turn at bat, she will return to the dugout and the next batter in the roster will bat.
12. There are no lead offs or stealing allowed.
13. If a runner leaves early and the ball is hit, the runner who left early will return to the previously held base. If the previous base is now occupied by the batter, the ball will be declared dead, and the batter will replay the last pitch at bat.

E. PITCHING RULES

1. For the first 4 weeks of the season, coaches will pitch. Week 5 and until the end of the season a player pitcher is required to pitch all innings. Each batter will receive 5 coach pitches during each at bat. If the ball is not put in play the batter is out. If the batter fouls the 5th pitch, they are still alive.
2. Player Pitchers
 - a. Pitchers must start with both feet touching the rubber, may take one step with delivery of the pitch and drag one foot. Pitchers may also start with one foot back. They must use windmill motion.
 - b. A pitcher shall have 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
 - c. A player may pitch a maximum of 1 inning per game.
 - d. Player pitchers will pitch until one of the following things happens: the ball is batted into play or strikes out the batter. No walks are allowed. A coach will enter the game and pitch to the count (i.e. 1 strike, coach has two pitches, 2 strikes – 1 pitch, no strikes – 3 pitches). The coach must pitch a strike to constitute a pitch (Umpires discretion – they can call a strike on the batter)
3. Coach Pitchers
 - a. Coach pitchers must throw the ball in an underhand motion. They may move forward up to the edge of the pitcher's circle (22 feet from home plate) and pitch.
 - b. The coach pitcher will remain on the field and be ready to pitch during the entire inning. The coach pitcher may not interfere physically or verbally after a ball is in play. If interference occurs the ball will be dead, and all runners will return to the last base occupied. Coaches will be removed for repeated interference.

F. PARTICIPANT and FAN CONDUCT

1. Players should remain in the dugout with their team during the game. Parents should remain outside the dugout area.
2. Parents and fans may not stand or sit behind the backstop.
3. All players, coaches, parents, and spectators are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times.
4. Managers are responsible for the conduct of their team and fans.
5. Cheering by players, even though directed at their teammates, should not be timed in such a manner to disrupt the pitcher during her delivery.
6. A player, coach, parent, or spectator may be ejected from the game if their behavior is interpreted by the league as "Conduct detrimental to the best interest of the players and the league". The ejected individual has 5 minutes to leave the field or park.
7. Ejection from the game is subject to suspension for 1 or more games as voted on by the league officers. Unless the ejected individual requests a hearing, the league officers will elect to conduct or not to conduct a hearing and vote on the question of suspension. Suspension shall be served as specifically directed by the league officers. Managers should assist umpires in keeping parents and fans from behind the backstop. No taunting of opposing team players will be allowed. Cheering by players, even though directed at their teammates, should not be timed in such a manner to disrupt the pitcher during her delivery.