

8U Coach Pitch Division Softball Bylaws

The goal is to provide a wholesome, enjoyable activity, which develops character, skill, sportsmanship and goodwill.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules will govern this league unless otherwise stated in these bylaws.

REGISTRATION FEE

To help offset expenses, a team fee will be required (amount to be determined at the beginning of each season).

AGE GROUPS AND ELIGIBILITY

1. This league is open to girls, 7-8 years of age. A player's age on September 30 of the current school year determines her eligibility for both the spring and fall seasons.
2. Players must register with their coordinating association, and teams must follow their association's rules. A player must meet the age requirement of the league in which she participates. Players are encouraged to participate in their own age group. Exceptions to "play up" to the next age group must be submitted by the parent and approved by their association's softball coordinator.
3. Players may only participate on one team at a time.
4. If eligibility of a participant is questioned, proof of age must be verified through one of the following (no copies): Original Birth Certificate, Military ID, or Passport.
5. Non-Virginia Beach residents must first register with a Recreation Association, and are subject to all of the Association's terms and conditions for participation. No Virginia Beach resident shall be excluded in order to accommodate a non-resident. No more than 2 non-residents on a team. Residents of Knotts Island, NC are eligible to participate and are considered residents.

ROSTERS

1. Team rosters are limited to fifteen (15) players, one (1) head coach, three (3) assistant coaches. All coaches must obtain a city volunteer ID badge.
2. A completed roster to include team name, team age group, coaches' names, and all player information (name, date of birth, jersey number) must be turned in by each team to their respective area coordinator prior to the first game of the season.

SCHEDULING OF GAMES

1. Games (8 games) will be played in accordance with the schedule.
2. Any coach finding it impossible to play a scheduled game must notify their Area Coordinator as soon as possible.
3. If games are postponed due to weather or other conditions, makeup information will be e-mailed to coaches by their Softball Coordinator.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each association will assume the following responsibilities:
 - A. Identifying and preparing game sites.
 - B. Custody of rosters and authority to rule on player eligibility.

STANDARD GAME AND PREGAME PROCEDURES

1. The contracted Officials Association will assign umpires; no team may refuse any assigned official. Umpires may consult at any time the “ **8u Coach Pitch Division Softball- Bylaws** ” bylaws in their possession for clarification.
2. Head coaches are responsible for maintaining proper conduct of their assistant coaches, parents, and players at all times. (In accordance with their area’s Code of Conduct)
3. The home team will be noted on the schedule and occupy the third base bench.

4. Starting of Games and Total Innings:

- A. Teams should arrive 30 minutes before scheduled game time. Games may start early only if both coaches agree.
- B. The game will be **1 hour and 20 minutes**.
- C. A regulation game is 6 innings, or when the time limit expires (whichever comes first).

5. Coaches:

- A. Maximum of one (1) head coach and three (3) assistant coaches/scorekeeper. .
- B. These individuals are the only ones permitted on the field or in the dugout/bench area during the game. Coaches are responsible for keeping spectators off their benches and out of the dugout area. Only the head coach can approach the umpire during the game. The head coach must call time and ask to approach the umpire if he/she has a question on a play or call.
- C. **Only coaches/scorekeeper with a valid Virginia Beach Youth Sports League Volunteer Identification Card may occupy the player’s dugout/bench area in addition to the limited number of players.**

6. Scorekeeper:

The home team shall provide an official scorer and furnish the official scorebook. It is recommended that the visiting team’s scorer frequently check with the home team’s scorer to avoid mistakes. The scorebooks of both teams must be filled out with all player’s names and uniform numbers. If this information is not provided, protests will be denied. In the event of any scorekeeper disputes that cannot be settled, the umpire will review both scorebooks immediately and make all necessary notations. The game will continue. As soon as possible, after the conclusion of the game, the official scorer (the home team) will present the Area Coordinator with the scorebook and all pertinent scorekeeper dispute information.

7. Pregame Warmup:

- A. Players and family on teams scheduled for the next game shall stay behind the bleachers to warm up and may not detract in any way from the game in progress.
- B. For the pleasure and safety of spectators and fairness to the teams playing, **no pregame loose ball batting of any kind or hitting ground balls or pop flies is permitted, including by coaches.** Girls must have a helmet on any time they are swinging a bat. No hitting off a pole during the game, either in the on-deck circle or near the playing field. Waiting teams can use a hitting stick if they are a good distance from the playing field. Girls can only work on throwing/catching or hitting off a stick prior to the game.
- C. Due to the time limit, pre-game infield practice will not be taken.

PLAYING EQUIPMENT

1. Game balls to be used are as follows: use 11 inch softballs approved by USA (formerly ASA) or NFHS .47 cor 375 compression with raised seam.
2. Game balls will be supplied by the home team – 1 new and 1 good (almost new)condition.
3. NFHS Bat Rules Apply.
4. Shoes with metal spikes are not allowed.
5. Catchers must wear a full helmet (no skull cap), with facemask, throat protector, chest protector, and shin guards. Hockey style masks do not require a throat guard.
6. 8u Batters and runners must wear helmets with earflaps, facemasks, and a NOCSAE warning label.
7. Teams must provide their own practice balls and uniforms.
8. Team members must all have the same color uniform and individually identifying jersey numbers. There shall not be duplicate jersey numbers.
9. The wearing of defender facemasks is required for all infielders and outfielders when on defense for the 8u division. In the event that a piece of required equipment is forgotten/broken, the individual's team is responsible for correcting the discrepancy. Teams should bring extra facemasks to their games as a backup.
10. **No jewelry** can be worn by players during games (No earrings, necklaces, etc.). If a player has recently had a piercing, the earring/stud needs to be removed when in the field of play (defense and offense) but can be worn in the dugout if needed/desired. The only exception to this rule is for medical and/or religious mandates.

PLAYING RULES

1. **Base Distance:** 55 feet
2. **Pitching Distance:**
 - A. The coach (or designated adult representative) pitches to their own team. He/she shall pitch under hand between 27 (front of circle) and 43 (back of circle) feet from home plate and must keep at least one foot within the pitcher's circle. The pitching rubber will sit at 35 feet with a pitching circle of 16 feet in in diameter.
 - B. Each batter gets five (5) pitches. If the batter does not hit the ball fair within 5 pitches the batter is out. Batters are awarded another pitch for foul balls hit on the fifth pitch and those after until she misses the ball completely for an out or hits it fair.
3. **Chalk Lines :**
 - a. Half Way Marks to be placed between bases
 - b. Base Coach Boxes
 - c. Warm Up Batter's Circle
 - d. Pitchers Circle 16 feet in diameter.
3. **Team Makeup:**
 - A. A team may play with 8 players. If a team has only 8 players, the lineup will be one through eight, and the 9th position will be recorded as an out.
 - B. If additional players arrive late for a game, they can play and are added to the bottom of the batting order.
 - C. If a team loses a player for any reason, there will be no penalty if the team has at least 9 players. If a team loses the 9th player for any reason, the batting spot vacated by that player counts as an out.
 - D. In order to continue play, a team must always have at least 8 players.
 - E. The batting lineup will consist of every player in uniform in attendance at the game. The batting order will remain the same for the entire game.
 - F. Each player must play at least two innings in the field in a full 6 or 7-inning game. Any 10 players in the lineup may play in the field in any given inning. Both scorers should check players off in the scorebook when they play their required innings in the field.
 - G. There can be 10 players in the field, field make up will consist of pitcher, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, short stop, third base, and 4 outfielders.
 - H. There can be 3 coaches in the field. One coach pitching and 2 additional coaches in the outfield. They can not interfere with any plays being made. They are there to offer direction and support to their players only.
4. **Run Rules:**
 - A. There is a limit of 6 runs per inning. The inning is over immediately when the 6th run is scored.
5. **Playing Time:**
 - a. If a 8u game has gone on for less than 1 hour and 20 minutes, a new inning will start and must be completed if the game's outcome has not been decided. The new inning will start the moment the third out is made completing the previous inning.

The respective coaches can decide not to play the second half of the final inning if the game's outcome has been decided. If the coaches decide to play the second half of an inning where the outcome of the game has already been decided, they shall not finish the inning if doing so delays the next game. No new inning shall start after the 1 hour and 20 minute time limit has expired. If a game is tied at the end of an inning and after time has expired, the game will count as a tie.

- b. Home and visiting team must leave the field and dugout immediately following the game to allow for the next game/practice.

6. End of play:

- A. Time is called by the umpire when the throw to the pitcher within the circle.

7. Overthrows: Play stops when the pitcher (coach) has control of the ball in the circle. If there is an overthrow, runners can attempt to advance one base. On the attempt back to the pitcher from an infielder the play dead.

8. Double First Bases:

Double first bases will be used at all fields for league play. The following rules will be enforced, consistent with National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) guidelines:

- A. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.
- B. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the orange portion is foul.
- C. If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after safely reaching first base and is not in contact with the white portion, then she is considered off the base.

9. Leading and Stealing:

- A. Runners must stay in contact with the base at all times until the ball crosses home plate. Runners may take a lead once the ball crosses the home plate. There will be no stealing in this division.

10. Courtesy Runner:

- A. When there are two outs, the player who made the second out of that half inning can become the courtesy runner for the catcher as soon as she reaches base. Once a courtesy runner is designated, no other courtesy runner or the catcher may return to run for the original courtesy runner. A courtesy runner for the catcher should also be used when 5 runs have scored regardless of the number of outs.
- B. Exception: Should an injury occur to the courtesy runner, the player that made the first out of that half inning may become the courtesy runner until she scores or is put out.
- C. If a player is injured during the game, a pinch runner can be used for that player. The injured player can return to the game at any time.

11. Player substitution:

Players can be substituted from the bench or moved to a different on-field position or back to the bench at any time for any position including pitcher, as long as time is called.

12. No infielder can be in front of the pitcher until after the pitch is thrown. Outfielders must be in the grass part of the outfield when the pitch is thrown.

13. Bunting is allowed in this league.

PROTESTS

1. Player Eligibility Protests: In the event a protest is lodged on a player's eligibility and the player proves to be ineligible, the player will be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season and the team will forfeit the previous game in which she has participated.
2. THE GAME MUST CONTINUE.
3. No protest involving umpire's judgment (ball or strike, fair or foul, safe or out, etc.) will be considered at any time.

AUDIO/VISUAL

1. Head coaches/assistant coaches may not record during game time play.
2. Recording equipment may not be attached to any part of the field of play
3. All recording must be done outside the field of play.

FIELD CONDITIONS/WEATHER

1. In the event of rain or other inclement weather, your area's coordinator will notify head coaches of delay or cancellation by 2 hours prior to game time.
2. Once a game has begun, the umpire will determine if the field is playable. The umpire's decision will be final. If a game is halted, the teams will not leave the immediate area for a period of 15 minutes. After this period, the umpire will decide as to whether the game will continue or be called.
3. If a game has gone at least 40 minutes and then called due to weather, it will be considered a complete game. If a game is stopped prior to 40 minutes, it will be replayed from the start.

NOTES

1. Coaches will advise parents and players of the bylaws. Ignorance of any bylaw will not be tolerated.
2. Please park in authorized parking areas only.
3. Smoking, use of tobacco products including smokeless tobacco, and use of all types of e-cigarettes (including nicotine vapor and non- nicotine vapor products) are prohibited by State Law on School Property. No smoking, vaping or use of smokeless tobacco in dugouts or on the field by players or coaches.
4. Per Virginia Beach School Board Policy, pets other than service animals are prohibited on school property.

5. At Virginia Beach City Parks, pets are permitted but must be leashed and under control with leash in hand at all times. Please be sure to scoop the poop.
6. NO PETS are allowed on the athletic fields at any time.

Updated 9/12/2024