

**ROANOKE AREA YOUTH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION
LOCAL RULES FOR AGE 8 & UNDER (8-U) SOFTBALL**

THESE RULES ARE SUPPLEMENTAL TO THE OFFICIAL 2023 NFHS SOFTBALL RULE BOOK AND SHALL APPLY TO 8-U LEAGUE PLAY FOR THE 2024 SEASON.

1. Home teams shall occupy third base dugout and visitors shall occupy first base dugout. No infield or sideline warm-up is allowed. All warm-up shall be beyond the base lines on the half of the field of the team's dugout.
2. 8-U League shall play up to six (6) innings prior to one hour and 15 minutes after the **scheduled starting time** of the game. No inning shall start after this time limit. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning. A team's turn-at bat will cease after three (3) outs or when all of the offensive team's players have batted. All play shall be suspended at 8:00 p.m. on school nights and 8:30 p.m. on other nights. Each team will supply at least two game balls (new or near new).

PITCHING

3. The batter is out after the coach-pitcher throws five (5) pitches to the batter, and the batter has not reached the base safely or has not been put out by a play in the field, unless she fouls the fifth pitch. If the fifth or subsequent pitch is hit foul and is not a caught fly ball, the batter will receive another pitch. Umpires will not call balls and strikes, but will keep the pitch count.

NOTE: A hit ball in fair territory must travel at least ten (10) feet to be considered a fair ball.

4. The pitching plate will be thirty-five (35) feet from home plate. The coach-pitcher may pitch from the front of the eight (8) foot radius circle around the pitching plate or approximately thirty (30) feet from home plate. **Pitching distance shall be at the discretion of the coach-pitcher but is suggested to be no closer than twenty (20) feet from home plate.**

5. Coach-Pitcher is the offensive coach who pitches to the players on his/her team. The coach-pitcher must make every effort to avoid interfering with any ball put into play either hit by a batter or thrown by a defensive player. The coach-pitcher shall only field the ball when it is being thrown to be put back in play.

NOTE: If, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach-pitcher intentionally interfered with the play, the ball is ruled dead, the batter is called out and all base runners must return to the last base they legally occupied before the pitch. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach-pitcher unintentionally interfered with the play, the ball is ruled dead and the pitch replayed. It should be deemed interference and the batter called out if a coach-pitcher pitching from **less than 20 feet** from home plate is hit with a batted ball, even if unintentional.

NOTE: The coach-pitcher shall do no coaching while in the pitching position other than to correct the batter's stance or position. The penalty for a coach-pitcher assisting in coaching after the ball is hit will be a warning for the first violation and removal from the coach-pitcher position upon the second violation. Whether a coach-pitcher assisted in coaching is within the judgment of the umpire and is not a call that can be debated.

SUBSTITUTIONS

6. The offensive and defensive teams will be made up of the entire team roster in attendance. A team may play with a minimum of eight (8) players with no penalty. If less than eight players are in attendance for a game and the opposing team has more than ten (10) players, the team needing players must use those players on the opposing team who are selected by the opposing team coach, to field a team (up to ten players). These borrowed players will bat first (top of the line-up) for the team with whom they played defense. Players arriving after the start of the game will be added to the bottom of the batting order and will go onto the field at the top of the next inning. If the late player replaces a borrowed player, the borrowed player will return to her team and would be added to the bottom of the line-up.

EXCEPTION: In the case of injury or illness, the injured or ill player may miss her turn at bat with no penalty.

EQUIPMENT

7. An eleven (11) inch "Incrediball" type softball with a vinyl or leather cover will be used for games. No bats longer than 29 inches will be used. Face guards are required on batting helmets (jaw protectors do not satisfy this requirement). Infielders, including pitchers, must wear face guards or helmets with face guards. Chin straps on batter's helmets are suggested, but not required.

8. Jewelry deemed unsafe by the umpire shall not be worn on the playing field.

GENERAL

9. On deck batters should be positioned in foul territory no closer than thirty feet to home plate on the offensive team's side of the field. A batter who releases a bat in such a way that, in the opinion of the umpire, could cause injury but does not contact anyone, shall be warned once each game, then called out for each subsequent offense. A batter who releases a bat in such a way that it hits a defensive player or umpire with such force, that, in the opinion of the umpire, could cause injury or could impair the defensive player from making a play, shall be called out for interference.

10. Bunting, stealing, and head-first sliding are not allowed. Feet first sliding is permitted. Base runners shall not leave the base before the pitched ball reaches home plate. Penalty: no pitch is declared and the runner shall be called out.

11. Runners may advance a maximum of one base on an overthrow to any base (including home base), but at their own risk. Umpires should not award bases unless the ball goes into an "out of play" area (over the fence, into the dugout, etc.). Note: There can be only one overthrow per player's turn at bat.

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12. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "TIME" which should be done when, in the opinion of the umpire, all play has ceased (runners not advancing and the ball is held by a player in the infield area). Umpires are encouraged to call "TIME" as soon as the play has ceased to discourage offensive leadoff and encourage defensive learning skills, (i.e., no safe zone in the pitchers circle).

NOTE: Players / coaches can request "TIME"; only umpires can call "TIME".

13. The infield-fly rule does not apply.

14. A maximum of five (5) defensive players (excluding the catcher) may be positioned inside the base line, but (excluding the pitcher) none may be closer to home plate than ten (10) feet inside the base line. The player-pitcher shall stand with both feet even with or behind (not in front of) and within eight (8) feet of the pitcher's plate. All remaining defensive players will be positioned evenly spaced in the outfield (in the grass or no closer than fifteen (15) feet behind the base lines). Defensive positions apply until the ball is pitched.

15. Two adult base coaches will be allowed for both offense and defense. The offensive coaches will occupy the normal coaching boxes at first and third bases. The defensive coaches should be located in foul territory at the edge of the grass beyond the coach's boxes.

16. Negative cheering will not be allowed. Coaches should not instruct players while opposing team is in the act of pitching and hitting the ball. No protest will be honored. Head coaches will be held accountable for the sportsmanship and conduct of their players, fans, and coaching staff. Games will or will not continue at the umpire's discretion if lightning or thunder is in the area, however, safety should always be the primary consideration. **The use of tobacco products, including vaping, is prohibited in the field area.**

17. Participants in the 8U league may not be or have been a member of a travel softball program during the current school year.

18. Coaches should notify the opposing team's coach at least a day in advance if a game is to be cancelled. The host team's coach is responsible for notifying the umpire assigner and field scheduler of the cancellation.

**John Cummings
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