



## MINNESOTA SOFTBALL 8-UNDER FAST PITCH RULES

The initial rules were created by Minnesota Softball Staff after consulting with many other states about how they conduct 8U softball. The idea is to get kids playing short games, learn how to play the game properly, and to enjoy playing the sport. The premise of this is not to develop pitchers. You can and should work on pitching during every single practice, with every single kid. If you have a kid that is an advanced player for that age, place them on a 10U team if feasible. Now entering our 5th year being organized the rules have evolved to meet the needs of associations and coaches to help make the sport better and to make it grow.

These rules were modified at the February 18, 2019 8-Under focus meeting.

### GENERAL

- Teams play single games on Wednesday night starting on May 9th. Each team will play eight (8) play dates on consecutive weeks concluding on Wednesday, June 27th. The last two league games will be double headers as a transition to 10U travel ball.
- The league will be combined with Big West and Tri County communities participating.
- The league will be hosted on one web site and teams will be divided in to multiple regions to keep drive and costs down.
- The league fee per team will be \$100. The State Tournament fee will be \$100. The check will be made payable to the host site at the time of check-in.
- The State Tournament will be held at Bloomington on July 13-14, 2019.
- Eligible Players: A player is defined as any youth of the proper age as of December 31, 2018 for their division of play.
- If a team can demonstrate geographic hardship and keeps them from playing in the league, they may apply to play in the State Tournament. However, all teams must play by the same eligibility rules
- We will not use umpires during league play.
- Youth umpires will be used at the State Tournament. Calls will not be disputed. If there is a concern, talk to the tournament director.

### EQUIPMENT

- We will use an eleven (11) inch softball, preferably a Dudley SBC11 with an ASA stamp.
- Pitching will be handled by a blue Louisville Slugger Pitching Machine and set at 30-34 mph.
- These machines require routine maintenance. Including replacing springs every two years. Visit [www.ultimatepitchingmachine.com](http://www.ultimatepitchingmachine.com) for more information.

### DIMENSIONS

- The pitching plate will be placed at 35 feet.
- Base distances will be 60 feet.
- 200-foot fences are preferred but are not required. A recommendation was made that IF a state tournament site is capable to place fences at 120 feet that this would be allowed.

## GAME PLAY

- Games will be played on Wednesday night. Games start at 6:00pm.
- Home team supplies two (2) new game balls per night.
- Defense will have 9 players on the field. However, no penalty for playing with 8 players. Teams with 7 players can play however, 8<sup>th</sup> player in the line-up will be an out.
- It is strongly encouraged to rotate players in to multiple positions during a game.
- Each batter gets 3 swings or 5 pitches unless last pitch is a foul ball. The at bat will continue on a foul ball just as with all other age groups.
- Bunting is not allowed.
- The Infield Fly Rule will not be applied.
- Runners will not be allowed to advance after a dropped third strike.
- Stealing is not allowed.
- Designated players (DP) will not be allowed.
- Leading off is not allowed. Runners may not leave their base until ball contact with the bat.
- The pitcher must stay in the pitcher's circle and behind or on the side of the coach until ball contacts the bat. For clarification, draw a line at the 35' mark across entire circle and use that line for the pitcher to stand behind. However, absolutely no movement can be made by the pitcher which places them in front of the pitching machine and or coach prior to pitch.
- Prior to the pitch, the pitching coach must verbalize and check that the defense is in the ready position and ready for play to begin.
- Outfielders must start the play standing on the grass at the edge of the infield. If the infield is cut for baseball create an arc 15 feet behind the bases and the outfielders must start behind that. They can't move until the bat has made contact with the ball.
- Players and runners will stop when:
  - A ball that never leaves the infield: Once a fielder has control of the ball the runners should stop at the next base. This encourages the infielder to throw the ball to the appropriate base without the fear of runners advancing to the next base because of an overthrow.
  - Ball fielded on the dirt or the arc equals one (1) base per infield hit.
  - A ball hit to the outfield: If no outfielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance. Once the outfielder gains control of the ball and throws it toward the infield the runners will stop at the next base. Even if the ball doesn't make it to the "dirt" on the throw, **the act of throwing the ball** in is the attempt at making the correct play. Players must stop at the next base. Exception, the outfielder can carry the ball to the infield to make an out. The runners can keep advancing in this situation.
- Teams will bat the roster.
- Innings are complete after 3 outs or 5 runs
- Run ahead rule: 15 after 3, 12 after 4, 8 after 5
- Games will be 5 innings or 65-minute time limit. On double-header nights there will be a no longer than 10-minute break between games. The teams may engage in a kid pitch scrimmage following the completion of the game. This scrimmage must be agreed upon by both head coaches and last no longer than 20 minutes or 1 inning.
- Coaches allowed on the field: Teams may have two (2) offensive, two (2) defensive and one (1) pitching coach feeding the pitching machine on the field to help train and teach the game.
- Coaches are part of the field and are in play and need to make every effort to stay out of the player's way.
- The coach feeding the pitching machine must keep a maximum of two (2) softballs in his/her possession, and not laying on the ground around the machine.
- Prior to the pitch, the pitching coach must verbalize and check that the defense is in the ready position and ready for play to begin.
- Coaches need to operate the game with the highest amount of integrity. At all times keep the kid's best interest in mind.