

In-House Rookies

1st-2nd grades

As usual our first emphasis is on having **fun**. Always remember our **AYF Mission Statement**: foster love of the game, stress sportsmanship, teach fundamentals, and encourage community involvement. Nothing in here about your team going undefeated.

Early Season Practices:

- We recommend a stations format with a lot of movement and emphasis on keeping the girls engaged.

General Game Rules:

- Good sportsmanship while creating a **supportive positive environment** for girls to have fun and learn softball is priority number one.
- Players should all arrive a minimum of **15 minutes prior to** the start of game time.
- Defense can play 10 fielders (4 in the outfield). **Outfielders** need to play deep enough so as to not create a wall of infielders. After the ball is hit, they are welcome to charge up and help.
- **Bench coach's** job is to help keep the kids focused and ready for their spot in the order. Everyone should know where they are going out on defense and should huddle together before hustling out together on defense.
- Remind the girls to **cheer** for each other. Give them specific things to cheer about. Call out teammates when they do something good and make a point to recognize them.
- Coaches/parents/players **meet afterward** to share positive statements, recognition of players, and treats.

Game Timing:

- The games will be **5 innings** or 75 minutes.
- **No new inning** will be started in the last 10 minutes.
- **Maximum of 5 runs** allowed per inning except no run limit in the final inning.
 - ◇ Change on 5 runs or 3 outs.
 - ◇ Your entire lineup bats in the games.
- **No Mercy rule explanation:** We want the girls to play as much as possible. We have inning run limits as well as a time limit so no overall "mercy rule" will be in effect. Coaches should always be practicing good sportsmanship and communicating with one another.

Equipment/apparel:

- **Helmets** must be worn at all times for hitter, on-deck hitter, and in-the-hole hitter.
- All players should wear a **softball/baseball pant** or some other long pants.
 - ◇ Note: please no shorts from a safety standpoint and as you need pants to wear the catcher's gear.
- **Rubber spikes only**. No metal cleats. We don't recommend tennis shoes as they are too slippery.
- **Infield masks** shall be worn by all players in the infield and will be supplied.
- **Catchers'** equipment must be worn and will be supplied by the league.
- Each girl needs to bring their own **glove**. We have few extras.

- It is acceptable to use your own equipment, however, please mark them in somehow so they don't end up donated to AYF.

Pitching/Hitting:

- Machine pitch from **30 ft.**
 - We use the blue Louisville pitching machine. It is a slingshot style pitching machine.
 - One Coach runs the machine. One player is positioned nearby to play the pitcher position.
- **No** bunting.
- Player will receive **5 pitches**. If the ball is not put in play then the batter will hit a ball **off the tee**.

Baserunning:

- **No** extra bases for overthrows.
 - We want the girls to try to make the throw to the correct base and not fear that if they throw it poorly the runner will get to move up.
- Batters will **run to first** on all hits in the infield.
 - If they happen to hit one to the outfield they should try to run to second at their own risk.
 - Once a ball is thrown back into the infield the runners must stop at the base they are closest to.
- No leading off or stealing.

Defensive positioning:

- The girls should **rotate** through the defensive positions as they are able.
- **Safety is the first priority** in determining where a player is placed in the field.
 - By the end of the season our goal is that everyone on the team could play any position.
- Fill the **infield positions** first. If you have fewer than 10, then play one in **right** field and the other in **left** – they need to be positioned in the outfield grass and not in the infield. The outfielder's primary responsibilities will be to back up grounders and throws. The right fielder needs to get in the habit of backing up first base.

Umpires:

- We will not have **umpires** for this level.
- Coaches will guide the game together.

Weather:

- In the case of inclement weather, the **head coaches will be responsible** for communicating with each other and their teams.
- Decisions should be made by no later than **1.5 hour before practice/game** and parents notified.

Most Important Rules:

- Keep the **energy high and positive**.
- Always **end the night** with positive statements, recognition of players, and treats.
- If the girls are having fun, they'll **come back** for more!