

METRO AREA 8-UNDER FAST PITCH LEAGUE 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 10th 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 January 10th, 2023 8-Under focus meeting.

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. Visit www.ultimatepitchingmachine.com for more information. Associations are required to do regular maintenance.

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. If possible for a State Tournament host site it is recommend to set fences at 120'.

GAME PLAY

- Games will be played on Wednesday night. Games start at 6:15pm.
- Home team supplies two (2) new game balls per night.
- Defense will have 9 players on the field.

- 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. The pitcher may lineup on either side of the pitching machine. However, absolutely no movement can be made by the pitcher which places them in front of the pitching machine and or the coach prior to the 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: If no fielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance. However, 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.
 - 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 (releases) 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. 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.
- Half 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 games on single game nights. This scrimmage must be agreed upon by both head coaches and last no longer than 20 minutes or 1 inning.
- On double-header nights there will be no longer than a 10-minute break between games.

Coaches allowed on the field:

- Coaches need to operate the game with the highest amount of integrity. At all times keep the kid's best interest in mind
- The defense will have three (3) coaches. Two (2) coaches can assist on the field. One (1) will assist the catcher with returning balls to the pitching coach.
- The offense will have three (3) coaches. Two (2) will be base coaches. One (1) will run the pitching machine.
- The coach assisting the catcher may comment to their batter but should make any comments short and quick in nature.
- The point of the extra offensive and defensive coach is to move the game along quickly.
- The new defensive coach should wear a glove to protect against foul ball and stay to the back of the batter.
- 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.