

YAC Girls Softball 8 & Under Rules

Summary

The 8 & Under division provides equal and full participation of all team members, development of sportsmanship and the fun and challenge of competition. In this division, girls learn techniques including base stealing and pitching to improve skills and increase enjoyment of the game.

No scores nor standings will be kept. Good sportsmanship and equal play remain paramount. Girls are encouraged to improve through skill building, practice, discipline and teamwork. Practicing at home is also strongly encouraged.

Games are mainly on Saturdays with an occasional weeknight game. If a game is rained out on Saturday, weather permitting it will be played on Sunday. All games will be played at Downing Park Pavilion Field or Chelsea Field.

The 8 & Under Division information, including these rules and schedule will be maintained on the web. ASA rules govern play with the exceptions contained herein.

1.1 All players present at a game must play. Each player who consistently attends practice must play a minimum of 2 innings of each game in the infield. Players cannot sit out 2 innings in a row or a second inning until all players have sat out one inning. The only exception to this would be a player that continually does not attend practice and in this case the Division Coordinator must be notified prior to the game.

1.2 Players will have opportunities in infield and outfield positions throughout the season. Coaches have discretion over who plays each position - particularly first base, pitcher and catcher. This is due to safety reasons (at first base and catcher), the need to provide a reasonably competitive playing experience while advancing the game at a reasonable pace (pitching and catching). It is the coach's duty to ensure that every girl has opportunities in the infield and outfield during the season.

1.3 The official ball of the 8u division will be an 11 inch Incrediball and not a regular hard ball.

1.4 A mechanical pitching machine will be used for the first two innings followed by girls pitching for any subsequent innings.

2 Number of Players

2.1 10 fielders will play in the field if 10 girls are present. A maximum of 4 players (excluding the pitcher and catcher) can only be in the infield prior to the ball crossing the plate.

2.2 Games will be played with less than 8 players. If your team has less than 8 players, you will borrow players from the other team for that game. Coaches will ask for volunteers and if none of the girls volunteer, coaches daughters will play with the other team. If during additional weeks the same situation arises, different girls will be used if non volunteer.

3 Batting

3.1 Roster batting is in effect. All girls are in the lineup and will bat whether or not they are playing the field.

3.2 Any player entering the game after the first pitch will be placed last in the batting order.

3.3 When the girls pitch, balls and strikes will be called by the umpire and the inning will end when the batting team has scored 5 runs or the fielding team has gotten 3 outs.

3.4 When the pitching machine is used, balls and strikes will not be called. The batter will be allowed a maximum of 5 pitches and if she has not put the ball into play by the fifth pitch, she is out. If a batter swings and fouls or misses three pitches she will also be out. The inning will end when the batting team has scored 5 runs or the fielding team has gotten 3 outs.

3.5 If in an inning, more than 5 runs are scored, the play will be completed, but the team will record only 5 runs. In other words, if the batting team has scored 4 runs in the inning, has bases loaded and the batter hits a long double, the play should continue until its normal completion but only 5 runs will be recorded and the batting team will then take the field.

3.6 The only players allowed to have bat in their hand will be the batter and the on-deck batter. In the case of the on-deck batter, she must remain in the fenced in on-deck area until her time at bat. There will be no tees or balls used in the on-deck area, just dry swings.

3.7 There is no bunting allowed and any batter who is hit by the pitch will be awarded first base.

4 Base Running

4.1 Base runners cannot leave the base (lead) until the ball is released. Base runners must return to their base when the catcher has returned the ball to the pitcher, and no play is made.

4.2 There will be modified stealing – third base only. Players may not advance an extra base (an additional base after she has already stolen third base) if the ball is overthrown during a steal attempt; If a player advances an extra base which is she is not entitled to (e.g. player steals second, and attempts to advance to third base when the catcher's throw enters center field) the umpire will send the runner back to her appropriate base without penalty.

4.3 There is no stealing home. A player on third may not advance home if the catcher throws to third after a pitch. The only exception is if the defense throws the ball or otherwise allows the ball to go out of play – in this case, it is a dead ball and the umpire will award 2 bases to each runner at his/her discretion. If a pitched ball is thrown out of play all runners will be awarded one base – included any runner on third base.

4.4 Base runners leaving the base early may be called out. This is a judgment call by the umpire. There is no requirement for a warning.

4.5 If the catcher drops the ball on the 3rd strike, the batter can't advance, but the runner on second can.

4.6 Players running to first base, and running through the base attempting to beat a throw, must use the orange part of the base. The white part of the base *may* be used if the first base player occupied the orange part of the base in an effort to catch a thrown ball.

4.7 Runners must slide at home plate when the catcher has the ball or is about to receive the ball at home plate. Runners advancing to any other base should avoid contact (usually by sliding) with any player in possession of the ball. The umpire may call out any player who does not slide or avoid contact (this is a judgment call by the umpire).

In summary: Runners must avoid contact (in most cases by sliding) when approaching any base where a fielder has the ball.

4.8 Fielders without the ball may not obstruct runners or block any base.

4.9 Batters and runners may only advance extra bases on balls hit, and cannot advance once the ball is returned to the infield.

5 Pitching

5.1 We will use the pitching machine for the first two innings and the girls will pitch the third inning on. Girls can only pitch a maximum of TWO innings per game. The coach of the batting team will operate the pitching machine for his/her team.

5.2 One pitched ball is considered an inning pitched.

5.3 The pitching distance is 30 feet. Windmill pitching is encouraged, but not required. If a girl cannot reach the plate she should go use modified pitching. If she is unable to reach the plate from the required 30 feet, she will not be allowed to pitch.

5.4 All ASA pitching rules apply including: starting with 2 feet touching the pitching rubber; the pitcher may only step toward the catcher; the pitcher may not 'practice throws' with a batter in the batter's box, without releasing the ball while standing on the mound.

5.5 The strike zone will be called at the umpire's discretion. Arguing balls and strikes is a violation of the Code of Conduct and is grounds for ejection from the game.

5.6 Pitchers will be allowed 5 warm up pitches between innings or when a new pitcher is brought into the game. Additional warm-up pitches should be taken off the field of play before the need for the relief pitcher is anticipated.

5.7 Intentional walks are not allowed.

5.8 If after the 4th week, the two coaches playing each other have a sufficient number of quality pitchers, the girls may also pitch the third inning and the pitching machine will only be used for the first inning. This is something that the coaches and umpire must agree to prior to the start of the game. At no time shall a team use a girl to pitch while the other team uses the pitching machine.

6 Fielding

6.1 The first base player must use the white base. The orange base should not be used to make a putout at first base on a routine play; however, the umpire may allow the use of the orange part of the base in certain cases of errant throws.

6.2 Fielders may not block any base if they do not have possession of the ball. If a player is standing in the base path without the ball, the umpire may call obstruction declaring that the fielder interfered with the base runner and award the base to the runner and any additional bases the umpire believes the player would have reached if the obstruction did not occur.

In summary: fielders without the ball may not obstruct runners or block any base. Runners must avoid contact – in most cases by sliding - when approaching any base where a fielder has the ball.

7 Safety

7.1 All girls must wear batting helmets with a strap and faceguard (both stamped with the NOCSAE label) while batting, running the bases, in the on-deck circle, in coaches' box or anywhere in-bounds. If a fielder wishes to wear a helmet she is permitted to do so.

7.2 Any player catching for a pitcher – including practice off the field - must wear a mask with throat protector and proper catchers gear.

7.3 All fielders must wear a mouth guard and/or a fielders' mask at all games and practices . If a girl does not have a mouth guard/fielders' mask at a game, she will not be allowed to play the field and will only bat. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.

7.4 A team will receive one warning with regard to batters throwing bats. The second time the batter will be out, and base runners must return to the bases occupied before the call was made. This is a team warning and not an individual warning.

7.5 All players at practices and in a game are required to wear the heart guard shirt.

7.6 Players are strongly encouraged to wear sliding shorts and a sliding pad.

7.7 The on-deck area is the fenced in box within the dugout areas. This is the only place an on-deck batter may swing and only one person is allowed in this area at a time. No tees or balls should be hit in this area during a game.

7.8 Players may not play up from a lower division. The only exception to this rule will be where it is felt that the player playing at her level may be a safety issue. With this exception, the player's parent will contact in writing the Softball Commissioner who will in turn make a decision on a case by case basis using an appropriately knowledgeable committee. This decision will also be final.

7.9 Thunder/Lightning Policy: Thunder and lightning necessitates that contests be suspended. The occurrence of thunder and/or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion That is thunder is thunder, lightning is lightning. When thunder is heard and/or when lightning is seen, the following procedures will be adhered to:

- a.) Suspend play and direct participants to go to shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, car).;
- b.) Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.;
- c.) After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, you **MUST** wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play.

8 Time Limit – Length of Game

8.1 Teams MUST be on the field and ready to start play 5 minutes before game time. Failure to be ready takes away from the girls playing time.

8.2 The game is 5 innings. A new inning cannot start after one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) after the scheduled game time. Note this is from the scheduled game time and not from the actual starting time. The only exception here is if the start time was delayed due to factors outside of the coaches' control (previous game went overtime, etc..) In this case, any new 'no-new inning' time must be announced and agreed to by both coaches and the umpire.

8.3 The batting team must have their catcher ready to play with catcher's gear on when there are two outs. If the catcher is on base with two outs, a courtesy runner MUST enter for

the catcher. The courtesy runner is the last batted out. This is so the catcher can get the gear on and not slow the play of the game down.

8.4 All teams will make their best effort to ensure a complete game is played. Intentional delays will result in a forfeit.

8.5 If 5 innings are completed before one hour and thirty minutes and the game is tied, an extra inning will begin. If the game is tied at the end of an inning after one hour thirty minutes, the game will end in a tie. In summary, no new innings after 1:30 applies to extra innings as well.

8.6 If the last inning continues past 1:30, it will end after an additional 15 minutes regardless who is up or who has not been up. Should the home team not have an opportunity to have an at bat or to complete their at bat, the score will revert back to the last completed inning.

8.7 An official game will be after 45 minutes or the completion of 3 innings (unless the home team is winning after 2 ½ innings).

Other items

9 Infield fly rule is not in effect.

10 Out of play will be marked. If the ball goes out of play on an overthrow, the base runner(s) will be awarded 2 bases from where they were at the time of the release of the throw. A ball that goes into foul territory is still in play and runners can advance at their own risk.

11 Reporting: Each team is required to email the 8U Coordinator to mention player's performance. Every effort should be made to submit different names each week.

12 Due to roster batting, if a batter is injured or has left the field (ex. bathroom), she will be skipped over in the batting order. No out will be charged. If the player returns, she will be inserted back into the spot she had previously held in the batting order.

13 All players, coaches, parents and spectators must adhere to the YAC Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in that individual (s) told to leave the field. If the violation is serious in nature, this matter will be brought to the YAC Board and may result in the individual (s) suspended from attending any future YAC events.

14 The home team shall sit in the first base dugout.

15 The only adults allowed in the dugout with the team shall be the Coach and Assistant Coach. We do welcome all help offered by parents, but must limit those in the dugout with the girls. It is confusing when adults other than the coaches or siblings are telling the girls what they should or should not have done.

16 Positive cheering and chants are encouraged and acceptable. It is not however, acceptable to chant derogatory chants at the opposing team especially those directed toward the opposing pitcher.

17 A schedule will be made to determine field duties. Each team will be assigned at least 1 day of

field duty. This responsibility includes raking and pumping the field (if needed due to weather),
lining the batter's box and foul lines as well as the pitching circle