



## Local Rules – Softball – Rookie / Instructional Divisions

### Division Definitions

- **Instructional Division (5-6 year olds)** – Instructional Division will be the girls' first experience with softball. Have fun! Girls will learn the basics and play different positions while preparing for the Rookie level.
- **Rookie Division (7-8 year olds)** – Rookie Division will begin to introduce the competitive aspects of softball while focusing on learning fundamentals. Players will work on building the skills they learned in Instructional while being introduced to new aspects that will help them in Minors.

### General Rules

#### Starting the game

- No umpires. Managers and coaches must know the rules and manage the game.
- Home team takes the 1st base dugout. Visitors take the 3rd base dugout.
- All games must start on time. Have your team on the field ready to start at the scheduled time.
- Both managers are responsible for starting on time. Reduce pre-game practice if necessary. If the game start is delayed, the times listed below are still in effect.
- Each team should have a Manager/Coach. However, additional parent support is allowed and encouraged as required to facilitate games and practices, so long as parents have a volunteer lanyard.
- Only the manager, coaches, and scorekeeper are allowed into the dugout during a game.
- Minimum number of players.
  - Instructional: Games can be played with as few as five players.
  - Rookie: If eight players are present, the game will start at the designated time.
- Teams may borrow a player from the opposing team.
- If a game is rained out or called due to darkness, follow official Little League rules.
- Target game length is 1 hour, 45 minutes.
- If an inning begins before 1 hour, 45 minutes has expired, that inning alone may be completed.
- A game may not be called for time if both teams have not completed their at bat (assuming the home team needs to bat) and the inning began before 1 hour, 45 minutes.
- All cheering must be positive and taunting of players (including rude, argumentative, or negative comments) by any player, coach, or spectator is prohibited. It is the responsibility of the respective team manager to ensure such activity is ceased. It's the responsibility of the manager whose parent is causing an issue to address/handle immediately.

### Game Time Limits

#### General Time Limit Rules

- All games must start on time.
- Both managers are responsible for starting on time. Reduce pre-game practice if necessary. If the game start is delayed, the times listed below are still in effect.



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### Game Timing

#### 5:30pm start time

- Target time limit is 2 hours.
- Do not start a new inning with less than 15 minutes remaining in the time limit (7:15pm).
- If the time limit is reached (7:30pm) and the game is not over, finish the inning.

#### Weekend games

- Target time limit is 2 hours.
- Do not start a new inning with less than 15 minutes remaining in the time limit.
- If the time limit is reached and the game is not over, finish the inning.

### Game Length

- Neither Instructional nor Rookie will keep score.
- Six innings played competes a game.
- Three completed innings is considered an official game, if the game is cut short by time or weather.
- Inning lengths.
  - Instructional: All players bat each inning. Half-innings end after every batter has batted.
  - Rookie: Half-innings end after three outs or every batter has batted.

### Field Maintenance

#### Before the game

- Both teams rake, groom, and line the field before the start of the game.
- Base paths must be raked parallel to the foul line.
- Standing water should be raked into the field, not to the outfield grass.

#### After the game

- Both teams rake and groom the field after the end of the game.
- Both teams put away bases, lock equipment boxes/sheds, and turn off the lights if no game follows.
- Both teams must ensure that all plugs (pitcher's plate, 1st base, 2nd base, and 3rd base) are in place whenever bases and plate are removed.
- All field issues should be reported to the division coordinator.

#### Field Closures

- Field closures will be communicated via text, website and/or Facebook.
- Upon field closure, do not try to work the field or re-open it.



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### Safety

- No on-deck batters. No kids holding or swinging bats around bench. Players only swing bats when they are at home plate batting.
- No metal spikes allowed.
- No head first sliding is allowed. Once a runner has advanced to a base, she may dive headfirst back into the base to avoid a tag.
- No bat throwing. 1st time: warning. 2nd time: out.
- All infielders, including pitcher, must wear a face mask. It is strongly encouraged that players wear face masks at all positions.
- Weather: If you hear thunder or see lightning the game must stop for 30 minutes. The game can continue as long as the field is playable and the weather has cleared. You must leave the field and go to your car.
- Only one batter at a time may occupy the batting cage, and helmets are always required.
- When using the batting cages, you must have a helmet on. Make sure batters are in the center hitting away from each other.
- Jewelry
  - No jewelry may be worn. This includes earrings, necklaces, rings, and watches.
  - Jewelry must be removed prior to playing the game, or risk removal from the game.
- No stickers are allowed on helmets other than factory stickers.
- Every player must wear a batting helmet when batting and running bases.
- First Aid kits and medical release forms must be on hand at every game and practice.
- All injuries must be noted on the Incident Tracking Form (available on the website) and reported to the Safety Officer within 48 hours. The Safety Officer will work with you on the next steps.
- Everyone must abide by the MOTLL Parent/Player Code of Conduct and the Coach's Code of Conduct.

### Batting Rules

- Continuous batting order.
- All players will be placed in a batting order prior to the start of the game. If a player shows up late, they will go to the bottom of the lineup.
- Both divisions use the pitching machine.
- Coach operating the pitching machine must be 18 years old or older and must have passed a background check (with MOT volunteer lanyard).
- Manager working the pitching machine makes all out/safe calls.
- Coach must remain at the machine to ensure that the “pitcher” does not come into contact with the machine.
- Coach should encourage return throws to the pitcher.
- The pitching speed must be agreed upon by both coaches prior to the game or before being changed.
- Pitching machine speed.
  - Instructional: Base speed should be 33 mph, but can be lower in the beginning of the season.
  - Rookie: Base speed should be 35 mph.
  - There cannot be any adjustments to the pitching machine speed once the game has started.



## Local Rules – Softball – Rookie / Instructional Divisions

- Pitching machine rules.
  - Instructional: The batter gets six pitches from the machine. If after these pitches, the ball is not put into play, soft toss will be used at this level if the player is unable to hit the ball from the machine.
  - Rookie: The batter gets six pitches from the machine. If after these pitches, the ball is not put into play, the batter may receive up to three soft pitches. If after these three additional pitches the ball is still not put into play, it will be counted as a strikeout and counted toward your three outs.
- If the ball hits the pitching machine or a coach, it is considered a dead ball and the hitter is awarded first base. All runners advance one base.
- If a player hits a foul ball on the sixth pitch from the machine, continue pitching to the player until as long as she is fouling off pitches.
- Infield balls put in play may only be awarded as a single hit if the runner is not called out.
- If a batted ball reaches the outfield grass line, each runner may advance an additional base at their own risk.
- No base stealing or leading off base is allowed.
- If an overthrow is made, the runner(s) may advance one base only.

### Defense Rules

- Ten (10) girls play defense on the field. (Four in the outfield.)
- No player should sit more than one inning per game.
- Every attempt should be made to rotate players each inning (except catcher and 1st base, who may play those respective positions a total of three innings each.)
- Catchers
  - Instructional: Catcher is optional in Instructional.
  - Rookie: Each team must have a catcher. It is recommended that catchers catch the machine and practice throw-back to the pitcher. However, if a catcher chooses not to catch the machine, they must stand prepared to make a play behind the backside of the batter. Catchers must wear all protective catching gear, whether catching the machine or not.