

OFFICIAL RULES TRI-VALLEY SOFTBALL

AAA DIVISION

Grades 3 and 4

2009 Season

Last Updated: March 26, 2009

If rules are not specifically covered, the rules of the Amateur Softball Association of America shall govern play.

A. Scheduling

1. Teams will be allowed a maximum of 5 practice sessions per week during the pre-season and 2 practices per week once the season has begun.
2. Game time is 6:00 pm unless otherwise noted on schedule.
3. A league representative should be consulted to confirm postponement or rescheduling of a game.
4. It is the home team's responsibility to reschedule a game no more than two weeks after the postponement.
5. The visiting coach and the umpire must be notified at least 2 hours prior to game time if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions.
6. The umpire will use his/her discretion in deciding if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions at the beginning of or during the game.
7. Games must be stopped immediately upon sighting of lightning. Umpires will advise coaches of decisions regarding termination of the game.
8. All rescheduled games must be made-up within two weeks unless agreed upon by both coaches ahead of time. Every effort must be made to avoid rescheduling.
9. *Each game is 5 innings or approximately 1.5 hours long.*
10. No innings will be started after dusk or after 8:00 PM which ever comes first.

B. Players

1. *Each team will play up to 10 players in the field at a time.*
2. There will be no substitutions allowed using players from higher divisions. Registered players from the same town, but different teams, may be used to play a game only as a last effort to get enough players to prevent forfeiting a game.
3. Added players must be placed at the end of the batting order and regular team players must get their first choice of field position.
4. Added players are not allowed to pitch.
5. Each team must have 7 players to play an official game. A forfeit will be called if either team fails to have 7 players eligible to play 15 minutes after the posted game time.
6. A team expecting to have fewer than 7 players may contact the opposing coach at least 24 hours before game time to reschedule the game.
7. All players will be included in a continuous batting order. The initial batting order reflects those players ready to play at game time. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order, not inserted in the middle of the line-up as they arrive. If an injured player in the continuous batting order is unable to play she will be skipped in the order and the opposing team will not get an automatic out.
8. Each player must play 2 complete innings in the field unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her.

9. Free substitution rules will be in effect.
10. A pitcher may return to the mound one time during a game if she hasn't pitched her maximum innings yet.

C. Pitching

1. At the beginning of each game each coach must declare a minimum of three pitchers to the other coach.
2. Balls and strikes will be called.
3. If a player pitcher gets to 4 balls on a batter a parent/coach will come in to finish that batter's at bat. (The number of strikes on the batter carries to the new pitcher).
4. Every at bat will end with a hit or a strike out.
5. Three strikes will constitute an out.
6. Batters are not allowed to walk. This is an attempt to speed up the game and prevent multiple walks.
7. First half of the season: Umpire may allow player a "Mulligan" on a called third strike, "That was a good pitch; you need to swing at pitches like that".
8. Second half of the season: The call is the call.
9. First half of the season:
 - i. Coaches pitch the first 3 innings.
 - ii. Coaches will pitch underhand.
 - iii. Players pitch the last 2 innings.
 - iv. Each pitcher may pitch a maximum of 5 innings per week.
10. Second half of the season (all games played starting May 11, 2009):
 - i. Players pitch the entire games.
 - ii. All other rules remain intact (see above).

D. Equipment & Field of Play

1. The bases will be 60 feet apart.
2. Double safety base is required at 1st base.
3. Batting helmets with face masks and chin straps are mandatory for batters, base runners and players waiting on deck.
4. Throat protectors, shin guards, chest protectors, and catcher's helmets with masks are required for catchers.
5. *Eleven-inch FLEXI softballs will be used.*
6. *The pitcher's plate will be 35 feet from the apex (point) of the plate. To ensure the safety of the pitcher, the pitcher is not allowed to pitch from less than 30 feet.*

E. Game Rules

1. *Each team is allowed to have coaches on the field during the game to provide fielding instruction. The coach may not interfere with the play. This should be weaned as much as possible during the second half of the season.*
2. *The home team score book shall govern the score of the game. The umpire must write his/her name in both teams score books.*
3. *When a pitcher has the ball within a 4-foot radius around the pitcher's rubber, the base runner is obligated to proceed in either direction to a base. Play freezes when the pitcher has control of the ball. Runners in between bases must go to the closest base.*
4. *Any tied games (at the end of playable conditions or 6 innings) are declared ties.*
5. *A dropped 3rd strike by a catcher will count as a strike and an out.*
6. *The infield fly rule is not in effect.*
7. *Bunting is permitted but only once per half inning.*
8. *Stealing will only be allowed after the ball crosses the top of home plate.*
9. *Stealing 2nd base and/or home plate are prohibited. Runners are not allowed to advance after a wild pitch and/or passed ball.*
10. *Stealing of 3rd base is permitted only 2 times per half inning.*
11. *Base runners may only proceed home via a hit.*
12. *The only exceptions for bunting and stealing are when a team is ahead by 8 or more runs. Base runners on the team that is ahead are not allowed to advance on wild pitches, passed balls or bunts.*
13. *Base runners may advance only 1 base on an overthrow.*
14. *If a batted ball hits a base runner, that runner is out.*
15. *If a thrown ball hits a base runner, that runner is safe.*
16. *Any base runner called out must return to the bench.*
17. *The home team will choose the umpire from among the spectators. A coach may umpire if no umpire is available. ASA umpires may be used at the town's discretion.*

F. Run Limits

1. *There is a 5 run per inning rule. Once a team has scored 5 runs the half inning will be terminated regardless of the number of outs.*
2. *A team will be allowed to score the greatest of 5 runs or the number of runs to get within 8 runs.*
3. *There are no run limits in the last inning of the game.*
4. *The game is over if one team is ahead by 15 or more runs and the losing team has batted at least 4 times. The home team does not have to bat for this rule to take effect.*

G. Safety Rules

1. All players must remove ALL jewelry to be eligible to play. Taping over earrings is not allowed.
2. Tri-Valley strongly recommends the use of mouth guards on the playing field. Other safety equipment including heart guards and face masks is allowed.
3. A batter that throws the bat will be given a warning (the umpire will inform the coaches and the player of the warning). The second time a batter throws the bat the player will be called out.
4. The runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately crashes into a defensive player. The defensive player could be holding the ball waiting to apply a tag or about to release a thrown ball.
5. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide feet first, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three foot line, the runner would be called out), or return to the previous base touched.
6. If the defensive player blocks the base path without possession of the ball, the runner will be safe. The defensive player is not allowed to stand on or straddle the base path, a base or home plate unless they have possession of the ball.
7. A runner must slide into home plate if there is going to be a play at the plate. The runner can be called out at the umpire's discretion. Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender may be ejected.
8. A runner may slide into the fielder, but not head first.
9. *In the judgment of an umpire or coaches that an injury that requires immediate medical attention occurs, the ball is immediately called dead and the player is attended to. Placement of runners and batters is at the umpire's discretion.*