

OFFICIAL RULES ASHLAND YOUTH SOFTBALL

AAA DIVISION

Grades 3 and 4

2010 Season

Last Updated: March 29, 2010

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

A. Scheduling

1. Weeknight game time is 6:00 pm unless otherwise noted on schedule.
2. The league coordinator should be consulted to confirm postponement or rescheduling of a game.
3. Both teams and the umpires will be notified at least 1 hour prior to game time if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions.
4. 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.
5. Games must be stopped immediately upon sighting of lightning or upon hearing thunder. League officials will advise coaches of decisions regarding termination of the game.
6. Each game is 5 innings or approximately 1.5 hours long.
7. 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 unregistered players.
3. Each team must have 5 players to play an official game.
4. 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.
5. Each player must play 2 complete innings in the field unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her.
6. Free substitution rules will be in effect.
7. A pitcher may return to the mound one time during a game if she hasn't pitched her maximum of 2 innings yet.

C. Pitching

1. Balls and strikes will be called.
2. If a player pitcher gets to **3** balls on a batter a coach from the batting team will come in to finish that batter's at bat. (The strike count remains the same on the batter.)
3. Coaches will pitch underhand.
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. Players pitch the entire game.

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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 35 feet.
7. All bats must visibly display an ASA approval stamp.

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 5 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 not permitted.
8. Stealing is not permitted.
9. Base runners may only proceed home via a hit.
10. Tagging up on fly balls is permitted.
11. Base runners may advance only 1 base on an overthrow.
12. If a batted ball hits a base runner, that runner is out.
13. If a thrown ball hits a base runner, that runner is safe.
14. Any base runner called out must return to the bench.
15. A coach may umpire if no umpire is available.

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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. If the team at bat is behind by 8 or more runs in any inning and there are fewer than 3 outs, they will be allowed to continue to score runs in that inning until their score within 8 runs of the other team. This allows them to exceed the 5 run per inning rule prior to the last inning of the game.
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 to avoid contact with defensive players 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.