

TEANECK BASEBALL ORGANIZATION

MIDDLE GIRLS SOFTBALL RULES

2023

National Federation of State High School Association Softball Rules will be followed in all games with the exception of the following TBO league rules:

1. **Regulation Game** is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings, 3 ½ if the home team is winning.

2. **THE FIELD:**
 - a. Bases 60 feet apart. Before the game, umpires should determine the halfway points between bases.
 - b. Pitching rubber 35 feet from the rear point of home plate.

3. **TEAMS:**
 - a. Teams must have 7 players (regular season or playoffs) in uniform available up to 15 minutes after the scheduled game time to avoid forfeit.
 - b. All available players are in the batting order. *Example: If 12 players are available, the batting order is 1-12 and 10 play in the field*
 - c. Ten (10) players in the field. At no time will more than ten (10) players be allowed to play in the field.
 - d. If a game goes a full six innings, no player can sit for more than two innings. However, if she comes late to the game, the manager may reduce the number of innings by the number of innings missed. That is, if she comes in the second inning, she may be limited to three innings; if she comes in the 3rd inning, she may be limited to 2 innings. And if she comes in the 4th inning she may be limited to one inning. If she comes in the 5th inning or later, it is at the manager's discretion that she plays during that game. During the playoffs, no player may sit for more than three innings; if she is late, the same alterations as during the regular season may be applied.
 - e. Anyone reporting to the game after the game has begun will be added to the bottom of the batting line up.
 - f. No more than three adults in the field/dugout.
 - g. Whether a coach or a player is pitching, there must be a player catcher. There may be an adult from the fielding team backup to the catcher. However, that coach cannot comment on the pitch; or give direction to the fielders. If that occurs, the pitch is a ball, play is dead, and all base runners advance one base.
 - h. For safety, prior to the ball being pitched, fielders must play behind an imaginary straight line drawn through the pitching rubber.

4. RUNS:

- a. Teams are limited to a maximum of 4 runs per inning during innings 1 through 5
- b. The 6th inning and any extra inning(s) have no run limit.

5. BASERUNNERS:

- a. May not leave the base until the ball crosses home plate or is hit. If a runner leaves early, she is out. There is no warning. There can be no play on a baserunner unless the ball is hit.
- b. On overthrows to first base, second base, or third base when a force is in play, no runners shall advance.
- c. It shall be deemed an obstruction if a fielder, during a play, fakes a catch or tag that causes the runner to alter course of action. The umpire shall award the runner one additional base in addition to the one she was headed to.
- d. The runner is not out if, after making contact with a base, the base is displaced and the runner is tagged; as long as the runner stays where the base was. The runner shall remain in position until time is called, or may advance at own risk. If the runner attempts to "follow" the displaced base or to progress to another base and is tagged, the runner is out.
- e. No head-first slides except when returning to a base. A runner who otherwise slides head first is out.
- f. Managers and coaches should encourage baserunners to slide on close plays. The "slide or avoid" rule is in effect: If the ball is coming to or is in the possession of the fielder, and the runner attempts to reach that base without sliding or avoiding the fielder, the runner shall be out. If there is no play at the base, the fielder must allow the runner access to the base. Otherwise, it is obstruction and the runner is safe.
- g. After a play is over, runner may not lead from a base while the pitcher has the ball on the rubber. The runner may not leave the base until the ball is hit, or advanced by a batter that is hit by a pitch.
- h. On plays initiated by a batted ball, play stops when the pitcher has the ball on or in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound. At that point, the ball is dead and play must stop. Until then, the ball is in play; runners may advance at their risk, and a play may be attempted on them. When the ball is dead, any runners more than halfway to the next base are awarded that base, if it is not occupied. If the base is occupied, or if she is less than halfway to the next base, she must return to the base from which she came.
- i. Stealing is **NOT** permitted.
- j. Tagging up is permitted.
- k. May not advance on wild pitches or passed balls.
- l. A courtesy runner may be inserted if a player is injured while batting or running the bases; or sustained an injury immediately before his at-bat. The pinch runner is the player who made the last batted out in the lineup. A pinch runner can only be inserted once for any given player in any given game. A pinch runner may also be inserted for the catcher when there are two outs. If a pinch runner is used for a catcher, then the manager shall use the replaced

runner as a catcher on defense for the entire inning immediately following.

m. In those leagues using safety bases: the first baseman must touch the white part of the base for the runner/batter to be out. If she touches the orange part, the batter/runner is not out. The batter/runner may touch either white or

orange. However, if she touches white and makes contact with the first baseperson, the batter/runner is out.

- n. Not Applicable.
- o. If a coach touches a runner during play in a manner deemed to assist the runner, the runner will be called out.
- p. Coach pitchers have the responsibility to field balls returned to them by the fielders. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the coach pitcher deliberately avoids this responsibility, the batter shall be called out and all base runners' advancement shall be reduced by one base. The ball is dead when a player has thrown the ball to the coach pitcher in the vicinity of the pitching rubber.
- q. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner is more than halfway to the next base before the pitcher has stopped play, the runner shall be awarded that base.

6. PITCHING:

Coach Pitching:

- a. Coaches will pitch the 1st & 2nd innings thru the first two regular season games. In those games, players will pitch all subsequent innings. As of the third regular season game, girls will pitch the entire game. The official date of change will be announced. A coach may not be brought in to pitch to a specific batter.
- b. Any batted ball that hits a coach pitcher is considered in play.
- c. Coaches will pitch underhand to their own team from a distance of 30-40 feet. It is the responsibility of the coach pitcher to throw pitches that are capable of being hit without penalizing their batters. No player on the fielding team (other than the catcher) may stand closer to home plate than the coach pitcher at the time a pitch is released.

Player Pitching:

- a. Pitcher's motion must be within or partially within the 24" width of the pitcher's rubber. The pitcher must start her motion with her pivot (non-striding) foot on top of or making contact with the pitcher's rubber. The non-pivot foot must be either on or behind the rubber. Only one forward step with the non-pivot foot may be taken before releasing the ball. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the rubber until the non-pivot, or striding foot, hits the ground. Penalty: Illegal pitch, the ball is dead at the end of playing action. A ball is called on the batter, and the base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out. *Example: Pitcher raises pivot foot off rubber/ground prior to releasing the ball. (a) Batter swings and misses ball. The Umpire calls illegal pitch, the batter is given a ball and not a strike and all runners advance one base. (b) Batter hits ball and is thrown out. The Umpire calls illegal pitch, the batter is given a ball and returns to the plate and all runners advance one base.*

- b. An 11" ball shall be used. Pitching style will be underhand with the pitching hand passing within 8" of the leg as the ball is released.
- c. Starting pitcher may have 8 warm-up pitches before the first inning, and 5 warm up pitches before each subsequent inning unless the umpire permits more. Relief pitcher may have 8 warm ups unless the umpire permits more, and 5 in all subsequent innings. In the event that a pitcher is removed for injury, the relief pitcher shall have as many warm ups as the umpire deems necessary but no less than 8. Upon removal as pitcher, player may play any other position but may not return as pitcher in that game. **Exception:** *If the game is suspended and resumed on a later date, a player removed from the pitcher position (but not from the game) may pitch in the resumed game in accordance with other applicable pitching rules.*
- d. Coach permitted 2 mound visits per pitcher per inning. The 3rd visit requires removal of the pitcher.
- e. Rules regarding pitchers being removed for hitting batters have been rescinded in this league.
- f. During the time that coaches are pitching, a player may pitch a maximum of 2 innings in a game. When the girls pitch the entire game, each may pitch a maximum of three innings.
- g. The throwing of one pitch constitutes an inning.
- h. All innings pitched must be consecutive. *Example: A player pitcher is removed in the 3rd inning with 2 out. A relief pitcher throws 1 pitch and gets the 3rd out. The relief pitcher is deemed to have pitched one inning and may return to pitch one more inning (if coach pitching) or 2 more innings (if player pitching).*
- i. There is no weekly limit to the number of innings pitched.
- j. If in the judgment of the umpire, a batter intentionally attempts to be hit by a pitch the batter is out. A pitch that bounces prior to hitting a batter is considered a hit batter. If a batter swings at a pitch that hits her; or if the batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, it is a strike.
- k. The pitcher may not wear a long sleeved shirt of a color similar to the softball used.
- l. No "Windmill Pitching."
- m. Player pitchers shall be allowed ONE walk per inning. After a pitcher has allowed one walk, starting with the next batter, once the pitcher throws 4 balls, that batter will NOT be granted a walk. Instead, for that batter, the batting team's coach will come in and pitch to that batter from the same distance as the girl was pitching, with the strike count remaining, as the batter had prior to the ball 4 being pitched. Example, if the batter swung and missed at the first pitch, and then saw 4 balls, the batter will now face her coach pitching with 1 strike. The result of that coaching pitching to the batter encounter will either result in a ball hit in play or a strike out, but not a walk. The girl who was pitching should be standing next to the coach pitcher to field a ball in play. The coach pitcher should not field the ball. After that batter, the coach will go back to the dugout and the girl pitcher will resume pitching to the next batter.
- n. Both in coach pitch and player pitch, a coach may stand behind the catcher to retrieve and return balls to the pitcher. The coach may not direct hitters or fielders and may not impact any play at the plate.

7. BATTING:

- a. 4 balls, 3 strikes during player pitching.
- b. Batter must be in the batter's box when swinging. Except where the batter's swing carries the batter out of the batter's box, a strike will be assessed against the batter if the batter leaves the batter's box to swing at a pitch. If the batter leaves the batter's box to swing at a pitch and puts the ball in play, the fielding team shall have the option to accept the result of the play or the strike.
- c. If the batter is called out for throwing the bat, the ball is dead and no runners may advance.
- d. Dropped third strike rule is **NOT** in effect.
- e. There must be no attempt at distracting the pitcher once she has begun her motion. This includes, but is not limited to chanting or yelling. Any yells or cheers must end as soon as she begins her windup. Failure to comply results in that pitch being called a strike.
- f. No foul third strike, except when foul tip is caught and held by the catcher. Any foul exceeding the height of the batter is considered playable and if caught, the batter is out.
- g. Batter will be awarded one base on a hit by a pitch (assuming they make an attempt to get out of the way).
- h. **BAT THROWING:** Warnings (reminders) will be issued during all preseason games. During regular season games, the umpire shall issue a warning before the game. Thereafter, a batter caught throwing the bat will be out.
- i. **Infield fly rule** is **NOT** in effect.
- j. **Injured batter:** An injured batter may be replaced by the next player in the order, without penalty and without the injured player being prevented from returning. The replacement batter assumes the count of the injured batter.
- k. Bunting is permitted only during player pitching. If a batter squares to bunt, she cannot then draw the bat back and swing away – the batter is out and the ball is dead.
- l. **Coach Pitching.** Batter will be allowed 3 swinging strikes, no balls. A strike will be assessed against the batter for failing to swing at 4 consecutive pitches. If, after 2 strikes have been assessed against the batter, and the batter has not swung at the next 3 consecutive pitches but fouls the 4th, the batter shall be permitted a maximum of 2 additional pitches after each foul. If she does not swing at three consecutive pitches after a foul ball, she is out
- m. Caged helmets must be worn while batting.

8. EQUIPMENT:

- a. Catchers must wear full gear, including mask, chest protector, shin guards and catcher's mitt.

- b. Non metal cleats are mandatory.
- c. Complete uniforms must be worn by all players. Players may wear alternate pants, as long as they are the same color as the TBO recreational uniform for the player's team. Player not in uniform must bat at the end of the batting order.
- d. No jewelry or combs. Medic Alert bracelets are permissible. Players with casts, hard splints or braces on extremities may not play. Braces on the trunk are permissible with a note from the child's physician other than a parent.
- e. Intentional throwing of equipment is prohibited and can mean ejection from the game.
- f. All team equipment must be kept in the dugout or in dead ball territory.

9. BATS:

Maximum length of bats shall not exceed 33 inches. Maximum width of bats (diameter) shall not exceed 2 ¼ inches. There is no applicable length/weight differential. A player found with an illegal bat must change bats. A softball bat must be used for softball and cannot be used in hardball leagues.

10. HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

Winning team's manager or coach is responsible for posting result of the game on website. Home team is responsible for raking the field at the end of the game, and putting all equipment in the lockboxes.

11. GAME CANCELLATIONS/RE-SCHEDULING

No game can be canceled or rescheduled for the convenience of the teams without the **prior** approval of the Schedule Coordinator. Failure to observe this rule will result in forfeiture of the game by both teams. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

12. TIME LIMIT:

- a. In the regular season, no full inning shall start more than 1 hour and 50 minutes after the SCHEDULED start time. If the game is tied, the game shall end in a tie.
- b. In the playoffs, all games should be played to completion. If a game is called because of darkness or rain, it will be continued from the exact point at which it was stopped, with the same lineups, at a time to be determined by the Division President in conjunction with the Scheduler. At the subsequent finishing of the game, any player not present initially but who are at the game at the time the game is finishing, may be added to the bottom of the batting order.

13. UMPIRES:

- a. The umpire shall have the authority to call or suspend a game once the game has commenced. Managers, coaches, parents, etc, shall have no say. An executive member of the TBO board who is not a manager, coach, or parent in the division may end or suspend the game if he/she feels there is a safety issue.
- b. NO UMPIRE: If there is no umpire, the managers may agree to utilize anyone they deem suitable and the game will be official. Please notify the Head Umpire if the umpire fails to show.
- c. The umpire is responsible for setting out the bases prior to the game.
- d. Umpires must enforce the rules as written. Managers, coaches and/or umpires **may not** alter any rules.

14. VERBAL ABUSE:

Verbal abuse of any umpire, player, manager or coach by any other player, manager or coach will not be tolerated and shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct. The offender shall be subject to ejection at the discretion of the umpire or at the direction of a Member of the Board who observes the abuse. If the ejected party refuses to leave, the umpire may forfeit the game to the opposing team.

If the abuse is from a spectator, partisan to a team, the umpire shall direct the manager of that team to intervene to stop the abuse. If the manager refuses to or is unsuccessful in stopping the abuse, the umpire, after a warning, may declare a forfeit to the other team.

If the abuse is from a spectator who is not a partisan of either team, the umpire may request the assistance of either or both managers to intervene. If the intervention is unsuccessful, the umpire may suspend the game.

15. PROTESTS: Protests can be on a point of rule interpretation only, not on an umpire's judgment call.

- a. Protesting manager must inform the umpire and opposing manager of the protest and the basis for it before the next pitch is thrown.
- b. The umpire must sign both managers' scorebooks at the point of protest and make a notation of the progress of the game (i.e. top of 3rd, 2nd batter, 1 out).
- c. The protested game must be completed.
- d. The protesting manager must submit in writing or email to the Division President the basis for the protest within 24 hours of the completion of the game. If needed, a hearing will be scheduled and the presence of the umpire and both managers (and their score books) shall be required.
- e. If the protest favors the protesting team, the game shall revert back to the time of the protest.
- f. All decisions are final.

- g.** Failure to follow any of these rules shall result in a denial of your protest. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**