

U8 SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Mission:

- The U8 Division's overall mission is to introduce young players to the game of Softball, and to encourage their participation through fun, instruction, and good sportsmanship.
- U8 is an instructional league, not a competitive league. The ultimate goal is to foster a population of young players that will continue to play the game and develop over years and years. It should be kept safe and fun!

Behavior:

- Wilmington Little League has a Zero-Tolerance policy. Under no circumstances should a coach, parent, or player engage in any physical or non-physical (verbal) altercation with another coach, parent, or player. Coaches should set the example for players and parents... always be positive and offer encouragement to BOTH teams. The ultimate goal for U8 is for the players to have fun and to learn the basics of the game of softball.
- It is imperative that any behavioral issue be reported to the U8 player agent and/or a WLL board member immediately.

Volunteers and Coaches:

- All coaches and volunteers must be registered and CORI checked in order to participate in practices and games.
- ONLY CORI checked coaches are allowed on the field or in the bench area. Coaches will be provided with WLL ID badges, and they should be worn at all times.

Safety:

- Player safety is THE most important thing. Coaches must always use their discretion and a common-sense approach to player safety, both on AND off the field.
- Bench organization is essential at the U8 level. Ideally an assistant coach will be assigned each game to keep players on the bench and engaged when not on the field. Players should be encouraged to keep track of their own equipment (glove, helmet, bat, etc) and be ready to bat when it's their turn. This will help keep the game moving.
- Bench coaches should ensure that only the on-deck batter has a bat, and is warming up in a safe area away from all other players and spectators.

Equipment:

- Each U8 player will receive a uniform shirt and visor. Players should wear uniform shirts for all games. No jewelry should be worn (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.).
- Each player should supply their own glove.
- Teams will be provided batting helmets, and players are free to use their own helmets if preferred.
- Wilmington Little League does not supply bats. However, if you or your team do not have bat(s), speak with your player agent and he/she should be able to provide some bats. Players are welcome to bring their own bats.
- Face Masks: face masks are not required at U8, but are encouraged. Teams will be provided with three face masks for team use. Players are welcome and encouraged to purchase their own face masks.
- U8 will use 11 inch "softie" softballs in all games and practice situations. Game balls and practice balls will be provided to each coach by the league at the start of the season.
- Catcher's gear: The U8 Division is largely a coach-pitch/coach-catch league. Therefore, the league does not supply catcher's gear to U8 teams. If you have a player that wants to learn to catch, please communicate that to your player agent and we can make sure that player is given an opportunity to develop in practice or in clinics.

Weather:

- In the event of inclement weather, Wilmington Little League will alert coaches if fields are closed. If fields remain open, it is up to coach's discretion whether games should be started/played.
- Lightning – if lightning is seen during a game, the game should be stopped immediately and all players should be removed from the field
- If a game is canceled or postponed due to weather, coaches should work together to reschedule and get field availability from their player agent.

Umpires:

- U8 division is an instructional league, and no Umpires are provided. Coaches should manage out/safe calls, etc.

Scoring:

- Coaches will not be provided scorebooks at U8. There is no need to keep score, as this is an instructional, fun league.

Game Duration:

- Games start at 6:00 p.m.
- Games should last 3-4 innings on average, and should not go longer than 90 minutes. A new inning should not be started after 75 minutes. Coaches should use discretion and consult each other on when the game should end, taking into account the weather, darkness, and player engagement.

Pitching Philosophy:

- The U8 division is a Coach-Pitch division. Coaches should pitch to their own team, and the object is to get each player to swing at good pitches and gain an understanding of basic swing dynamics and pitch selection.
- Coaches that are pitching should not interfere with any plays in the field or play a batted ball.
- There are no walks or strike-outs. All batters will either hit a pitch, or hit off of a tee after 6 pitches are thrown.
- Coaches are also encouraged to teach basic pitching skills to players in practice, and if appropriate, encourage players that have an interest in pitching to attend the pitching clinic hosted by Wilmington Little League on Saturday afternoons. Players should NOT pitch during U8 games.

Game play:

- All players should play in the field during every inning. There should be one player at each of the following positions: first base, second base, shortstop, third base, pitcher (behind the coach). All other players should play in the outfield, on or near the grass. Fielders should be encouraged to play their position. Coaches should rotate all players at all positions throughout the game.
- Each batter should get 6 pitches from the coach, then a T should be used. This is to keep the game moving and give all players the chance to run the bases and stay engaged.
- If an out is made in the field, the runner should come off the base and go to the bench.
- Outs are not counted. Each team will bat through the entire batting order once (or twice if there is a significant amount of players missing, and coaches agree), and then the inning ends.
- Runners/hitter can advance multiple bases if the ball is hit to the outfield. Once the ball comes back to the infield, the runners should stop. Runners should not advance on errors... just on batted balls. Coaches should use discretion here. The spirit of the rule is to encourage players to stretch a single into a double, or to score from second on a base hit to the outfield. We don't want runners circling the bases while the fielders "throw it around".
- No stealing: base runners are not allowed to steal bases or lead. Runners should remain on the base until the ball is batted.
- No bunting

Attendance/Rosters:

- If one team has significantly fewer players than the other, coaches are encouraged to “loan” players to the other team.

Important contact information:

Joe Langone, WLL Board Member, U8 Player Agent
Mike Tentindo, WLL Board Member, Softball – Equipment Manager, U14 Player Agent
Brian Gillis, WLL Board Member, Softball – CORI officer
Billy Norman, WLL Board Member, Softball
Michelle Drozdowski, WLL Board Member, Softball – Webmaster
Paul Maiella, WLL Board Member, Softball – CORI officer and scheduling
Jaret Balter, WLL President
Dan Watne, WLL Board Member, VP Softball

U8 Coaches:

