

Harlan/Hoagland/Monroeville/Woodburn/New Haven
8U Softball Prep League Rules
Approved 3/17/25

General Rules:

- 1) All rules fall under ISHAA regulations unless superseded by specific rules below.
- 2) This is a Coach Pitch League see pitching rules below.
- 3) On defense, up to two coaches are allowed in the outfield to encourage, position, and instruct players. However, once the ball is live, coaches may only verbally instruct players and are not permitted to physically touch the ball or a player.
- 4) Games will consist of six (6) innings or after a complete inning ends upon the game clock reaching 1 hour and 15-minutes, whichever comes first (see timing rules below).
- 5) Games can end in a tie. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, no extra innings will be played. If needed, a playoff game will be played to make final seeding.
- 6) Only a board official can suspend the game due to weather prior to the start of a game. However, Coaches can agree to delay/suspend the game due to weather if a weather event interrupts a game after it has started.
- 7) If weather ends a game, it will be considered complete if 4 innings are played or 3 1/2 innings with the home team leading.
- 8) Three outs recorded by the defense or ten players batted by the offense, whichever comes first, will constitute the end of an inning.
- 9) When the 10th batter is coming to bat, the offensive coach shall notify the opposing team's coach that it is their last batter for that inning. If the announcement is not made, the batter is declared out. Play stops as soon as an out is made or as soon as the player pitcher has control of the ball and at least one foot in the pitcher circle. If a runner is advancing towards home during the 10th batter of the inning, their run will only count if they have crossed the plate before an out was made or the ball is in control of the pitcher in the pitcher circle. A batted ball back to the pitcher and the pitcher does not make a play attempt, all forced runners will get to advance one base.
- 10) Each player in attendance is required to play every other inning on defense.
- 11) Free defensive substitutions are permitted.
- 12) Teams must bat through all available players.
- 13) No new innings will be started after 10:45pm. Game must be stopped promptly at 11:00pm and rescheduled picking up where the game ended.

Player Eligibility Rules:

- 14) Player must be 8 years old or younger as of January 1st of the current year to be eligible for the Prep Girls Division. Any exception requires board approval.

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- 15) A team must have a minimum of eight players to start a game or the game will be declared a forfeit.
- 16) Teams may only bring up players from their own park's tee ball program. Using players from another 8u prep team or a child who is not registered at their own park's tee ball program is not allowed.
- 17) If a sick or injured player leaves the game and a substitute is not available, that position in the batting order will be skipped and will not count as an out. The injured/sick player may not return to the game.

Equipment Rules:

- 18) The home team must supply the one new 10" RIF Blue Dot softball prior to the game. The visiting team will supply one 10" RIF Blue Dot softball for backup which can be a used ball in acceptable condition.
- 19) Bases will be spaced 60 feet apart with the pitching rubber set at 35 feet from home plate.
- 20) A 16' diameter pitching circle drawn in chalk around the center of the pitching rubber.
- 21) A 10' arc should be drawn in chalk measured from the back of home plate to both the first and third baselines to define how far a ball must be batted to be considered a fair ball (see rule 39)
- 22) Halfway lines will be drawn in chalk approximately equidistant between each base (other than between home plate and first base).
- 23) Fielding facemasks must be worn by the player-pitcher. Facemasks are also encouraged, but not mandatory, for the other infield positions.
- 24) Metal cleats are not allowed. If cleats are worn, the cleats must be of rubber or molded plastic construction.
- 25) No jewelry is permitted except if required for medical or religious purposes. If needed, permitted jewelry then must be taped down.

Timing Rules:

- 26) Start time of the game will be declared by the coaches just prior to giving the ready for play signal prior to the first pitch.
- 27) For the purposes of time, the next inning begins at the time of the third out in the bottom of the previous inning.
- 28) When the game clock reaches 1 hour and 15 minutes, the current inning will continue until it is completed which will then end the game.
- 29) Upon a weather delay, the game clock is stopped. The game clock will restart at the time the coaches signal ready for play after the delay.

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- 30) Tournament games will follow regular season timing rules except for the championship game. The championship game will be played the entire 6 innings regardless of time.

Pitching Rules:

- 31) The coach-pitcher must pitch underhand with both feet inside the pitching circle until the ball crosses home plate or the pitch is batted. If the coach-pitcher does step outside of the circle with any part of the foot prior to the ball crossing the plate or being contacted by the batter, the play will be called dead with pitch counted as one of the six allowed pitches for that batter.
- 32) If the coach-pitcher is unintentionally contacted with a batted ball, the play is ruled dead with the batter being awarded first base with any unforced runner(s) remaining at their base(s); any forced runner(s) are granted the next base(s).

Feilding Rules:

- 33) Teams will play with ten players on the field. Six players must be in the infield and four players must be in the outfield. Bringing in extra insiders is not allowed. In the event a team only has eight or nine available players, coaches may opt out of having to field a catcher. Note: In the event of not fielding a catcher, only 5 players are allowed to be in the infield.
- 34) For balls fielded inside the infield, play stops when the player-pitcher has control of the ball with one foot inside the pitching circle. Runner(s) not past the halfway point (30ft) to the next base, must return without being put out.
- 35) For balls fielded in the outfield, play stops once an infield position player or the player-pitcher has control of the ball within the baselines. Runner(s) not past the halfway point (30ft) to the next base, must return without being put out.
- Clarification for Rules 34 & 35: Coaches will make the decision for each play and are encouraged to coach their players with the spirit of the game as the priority. ***Example: A coach should not send a runner from 1st to 2nd while the shortstop has the ball with the sole purpose of inducing an overthrown ball, the spirit of the game would tell you play is dead.***
- 36) A batted ball fielded by the player-pitcher in the circle is a live ball for making a play at first or any other base of the player-pitcher's choice. If player-pitcher in possession of the ball does not attempt make a play on the batter or any other advancing runner, the batter is granted first base, and all forced runners will get to advance one base and the play will be stopped.
- 37) On overthrown balls, runner(s) may advance only one base at their own risk, after that the play will be called dead. Thus, only 1 overthrown ball is allowed per batter.

Batting Rules:

- 38) Each batter gets six pitches or three unsuccessful swings, whichever comes first, before an out is recorded as a strikeout.
- Note: Coaches should encourage the players to swing the final pitch no matter what.

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- 39) If the batter's 6th pitch (or subsequent final pitch) results in a foul ball, the batter will continue on her final pitch until either a strike out or a fair ball is recorded.
- 40) The batted ball must pass the 10' line to be ruled a legal hit. If the ball does not pass the 10' arc line, play will be stopped with all baserunners returning to their original base and the batter returning to her at bat. Balls hit in fair territory inside the arc will not be counted as an unsuccessful swing but will count as a pitch.
- 41) Batters are not permitted to bunt.
- 42) A batter will be warned for throwing the bat upon the first occurrence. The second infraction by the same player will result in the batter being declared out and all baserunners being returned to their previous bases.
- 43) If a batted fair ball goes out of Field of Play (either under or over the fence), the defensive player is to put their hands up as a signal to the coaches. If confirmed out of play, the batter will be awarded ground rule double.

Base Running Rules:

- 44) Advancing to 1st after a batted ball, runners must use the orange bag (when provided) if there is going to be a play at first base.
- 45) On overthrows to first base all but the batter may advance one base at their own risk (also see rule 36). This is to encourage teaching the play at 1st base.
- 46) Lead offs are not permitted once the player-pitcher has control of the ball with one foot on the pitching circle.
- 47) Base runners are not permitted steal any base.
- 48) For purposes of encouraging concentration on the bases, runners may leave the base after the ball crosses the plate. A players will be warned for leading off or leaving early the first time. A player caught leaving early after a warning will be called out.
- 49) While the ball is live, a runner who committed to the next base before the play is stopped by either the player-pitcher or infielder may advance to the next base if the baserunner has advanced past the halfway line to the next base (also see rules 34 & 35).
- 50) Baserunners must avoid contact. Runners do not have to slide if there is a play being made on them. However, intentionally running over or into defensive players is not permitted and will be cause for player ejection.
- 51) Headfirst sliding is not allowed when advancing to a base. A player who headfirst slides into an advancing base will be called out. However, a player may dive back headfirst to a base he has previously reached.

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- 52) The infield fly rule does not apply and will not be enforced.
- 53) The “dropped third strike” rule does not apply and will not be enforced.
- 54) Teams must have a coach at first and third base. Players are not permitted to coach the basepaths.

Administrative Rules:

- 55) Weather and mandatory school functions are the only acceptable reasons to cancel a game.
Weather cancelations are to be communicated by the hometown board to the visiting team’s board 1 hour or more prior to game time. The coaches of both teams should coordinate a rescheduled date and time within 7 days. If the game is not rescheduled within 7 days, coaches should escalate to their park’s board president for assistance.
- 56) The division representative (sometime called the “league rep”) will gather results, maintain standings, and post the league standings in public forum.
- 57) Coaches are responsible for reporting game scores to the division representative.
- 58) League standings are based team’s overall record. If two teams finish with the same record, the tie breakers in order of priority will be: head-to-head record, defensive runs allowed, offensive runs scored. League Standings will also determine seeding for the end of season tournament.
- 59) Tournament will be by division (Harlan/Woodburn and Hoagland/Monroeville/New Haven) with the two division champions playing each other for the league championship. The championship venue will be determined by year. Odd years will be North (Harlan/Woodburn), Even years will be South (Hoagland/Monroeville). The Home Team will be determined by a coin flip.
- 60) There will be no “coaches’ option” regarding these rules. Coaches who agree to override any league rules will result in an automatic forfeit for both teams.
- 61) Trophies will be given out for the Champions and Runners Up for both the regular season and the end of season tournament.

Conduct Rules:

- 62) Any coach who is ejected from a game by an umpire shall serve a one game suspension for the next available game.
- 63) No alcohol or smoking in the proximity of the playing areas, concessions or areas where families and players gather. Coaches, managers, and/or scorekeepers will be immediately ejected including a once game suspension if caught smoking or drinking on park grounds.
- 64) In an effort to promote good sportsmanship, cheers and chants from players in the dugout are allowed and should always be in direct support of your own team. Negative cheering directed at the opposing team’s players, including the pitcher, is not acceptable. Coaches are always responsible for the good sportsmanship of their players.