

PWYSA SOFTBALL LEAGUE

RULES OF PLAY

Division III / Player Pitched

Division III is 4th and 5th grade. It is player pitched.

Batting

1. In all divisions, the Batter is required to wear a helmet with facemask while batting.
2. The Batter walks on four balls and strikes out on three strikes. (See Pitching Rule No.1 and 2).
3. Bunting is allowed.
4. Throwing the bat after hitting the ball is an automatic out in all divisions. Coaches will remind the players of this rule prior to each game. No base runners can advance on an automatic out. Safety of the players is a major concern.
5. In Division III, "round robin" batting will be used. A team batting order will be made and followed through the entire game. No changes to the batting order will be made except in case of injury. The opposing Coach and Umpire will be informed and agree to the decision. Late arrivals will be added at the bottom of the batting order. Substitute players will also be added at the bottom of the batting order. If a player bats out of order and a pitch is thrown to them, the batter is out.
6. A Batter hit by the pitched ball automatically advances to first base. This does not apply if the coach comes in to pitch.
7. On a dropped 3rd strike, the batter is out. The batter can not attempt to run to 1st base.

Pitching

1. This division is fast pitch. Pitchers are allowed to take a full 360-degree arm swing, but they are not required to do so. The strike zone is between the batter's armpits and kneecaps. For a strike to be called the ball must enter the strike zone but the arc height of the ball will not be considered.
2. A foul ball on the third strike is not an out no matter how many are hit with one exception. A Batter who fouls the ball while attempting to bunt on the third strike is out.
3. When the Pitcher begins her motion, both feet must be touching the rubber as identified in the pitching area. No backward step is allowed in the pitching motion.
4. Pitchers are limited to pitching four innings in one game. It is encouraged that, that pitchers are rotated so that no pitcher pitches more than two straight innings. Throwing one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.
5. There must be a change of Pitchers if in one inning a third time-out is called and the Coach visits the pitching mound. Note with free substitution the Pitcher could re-enter the game in a later inning if the maximum innings had not been reached.
6. In the judgment of the Umpire, a Pitcher who intentionally hits or attempts to hit a Batter with a pitched ball will be removed from the game and referred to the Division Coordinator for possible further sanction. The Umpire will inform the coach of the action in such a manner as to not embarrass the player. If an intentional hit or attempted hit is called, the Batter will advance to first base. The Umpire's ruling on this matter is final.
7. The Umpire, at their discretion, can remove a Pitcher that hits three Batters in one inning. The Umpire's ruling on this matter is final.
8. The Pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball or else a balk will be called. The first balk will result in a verbal warning from the umpire. A second balk will result in a ball to the Batter and an advance base to all runners.
9. After a pitcher walks 3 batters in an inning, the opposing coach is permitted to enter the game to replace the opposing pitcher and then pitch to his/her own players. The coach cannot field the ball, cannot walk his/her own players, and strike outs are allowed.
 - The coach finishes the inning
 - The pitcher may come back and pitch again in the next inning
 - Pitcher stays in game to field the ball

Baserunning

1. In all divisions, base runners are required to wear a batting helmet.
2. Slides into first base are not allowed. A base runner attempting to slide will be called out. An orange safety base is used on all fields, and the base runner must run over the orange safety base or be called out.
3. A base runner that runs into a defensive player with the ball and knocks the ball loose will be called out. However, a base runner that slides into a defensive player and knocks the ball loose will be safe.
4. There is no lead off from the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. A base runner leaving the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand will be called out.
5. On overthrows where the ball remains in play and not in a fielder's possession, the base runner can advance at her own risk.
6. Stealing is allowed.
7. Once the pitcher has control of the ball and is in the pitching circle, runners must stop at the base they occupy at that time or, if between bases, must immediately continue to the next base or return to the previous one.
8. Any runner purposely stopping between bases to draw a throw from the pitcher will be called out. The umpire will call play ended when the pitcher has the ball within the pitching circle and he/she has deemed play stopped. .
9. A baserunner running from 3rd to Home plate must attempt to slide in the event the catcher has the ball and is attempting to cover home plate or make a play on the runner. This rule does not apply if the catcher is not covering Home plate or if there is a force play at home and the catcher is not attempting to make a tag play on the runner. Infractions of this rule will result in the runner being called out. The umpire has final say as to what constitutes an infraction of this rule.
10. Base runners can advance at their own risk on overthrows where the ball remains live in play and not in the pitcher's possession within the pitching circle. The ball remains "live" until time is called by the Umpire and/or the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitching circle.

Fielding

1. 10 players are allowed to play at traditional positions. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, short-stop, pitcher, catcher, left field, left center, right center and right field.
2. Where bunting is allowed, the infielders can station themselves inside the base path more than five feet.
3. Outfielders are only required to station themselves on the outfield grass.
4. Free substitution of defensive players is allowed.
5. Rotating defensive positions at least every two innings is mandatory to provide the players a chance to enhance learning and to gain confidence. An attempt must be made to have each child play each position evenly throughout the season. All players present will play at least half the game defensively, unless this is impossible because of a shortened game, the run rule, or removal of a player for unsportsmanlike conduct. A Coach who so benches a player will advise the Umpire and opposing Coach of the removal.
6. The infield fly and intentionally dropped ball rules will apply. An infield fly is a fair ball, not including a line drive, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when First and Second or First, Second and Third bases are occupied and there are less than two outs. The Umpire must immediately call out "INFIELD FLY – BATTER IS OUT." If the ball is near the foul line the Umpire should call "INFIELD FLY– BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR." The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch after a catch and advance. When, with less than two outs and a runner on first base, an infielder intentionally drops or lets drop a fair fly ball, including a line drive or bunt, which can be caught with ordinary effort, the batter is out, the ball is dead and base runners must return to the last base at the time of the pitch. A trapped ball is not considered as having been intentionally dropped. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

Stoppage of Play/Time Out

1. In all divisions when an Umpire is present, the ball remains alive until the Umpire calls time.
2. The Umpire will call play ended when the ball has been returned to the Pitcher and the Pitcher is inside the eight-foot radius of the pitcher's plate (the pitchers circle). A base runner off of a base at that time must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or return to the base left. The responsibility is completely on the base runner, there is no obligation on the Pitcher to look, fake or throw.
 - I: Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to the last base after the pitcher has the ball in the pitching circle will result in the base runner being called out.
 - II: Once the runner has returned to any base for any reason, she will be declared out if she leaves said base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the Pitcher leaves the pitching circle or drops the ball, or (3) the Pitcher releases the next pitch.
 - III: If two runners are off base at the same time, the Umpire must determine which runner was off first. Only one runner will be called out.
 - IV: When a base runner has been declared out, the ball is ruled dead. It is not possible for more than one out on the look back rule.

Equipment

1. Batting helmets with face masks will be worn when batting and base running.
2. The Catcher will wear a mask with a chest protector and shin guards.
3. When a player is warming up a Pitcher either on or off the field, full protection should be worn.
4. Steel spikes or cleats are not allowed; players may wear rubber cleats or tennis shoes.
5. 11 inch ball will be used.

Sportsmanship

1. All players, coaches and spectators will treat all participants with respect and dignity – before, during and after the game.
2. Players may be removed from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. As part of being a good sport, teams will line up and shake hands after each game.

Game, Time Limit, Innings of Play

1. Innings of play: seven innings. If the game is tied at the end of the allowed innings, the game will be continued by playing additional innings until one team has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made. During each additional inning, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the last player who batted in the previous inning being placed on second base with one out. The game will continue for a minimum of one inning or longer if conditions permit. A tie game will be declared if the score is equal when the Umpire because of dark or weather or other reason calls the game.
2. Time limits: except for tie games, no inning will start after one hour and 20 minutes of play.
3. During doubleheader games, teams should be ready to take the field immediately following the end of the game they are following.
4. A total of five runs per inning can be scored.
5. Games may be called for inclement weather at any time. If lightening can be seen or thunder heard, the game must be stopped immediately because the storm is within 10 miles. A game will be complete if at least four and one- half innings have been played.

Field Dimensions

1. As defined in the ASA rulebook with the following exceptions.
2. Exceptions: 60' base path, 35' pitching

Substitute Players

1. Substitute players may not play more innings in the field than rostered players from the team. They must be from the same division or a lower division.
2. Substitute players will only play in the outfield and will bat at the end of the batting order.

Umpires' Authority

1. Umpires are in charge of the game. The Umpire has the authority to remove players, coaches and spectators from the playing field area and the stands if they are disruptive and abusive to anyone on or off the playing field.
2. Umpires will call illegal or no-pitch prior to the pitched ball crossing the plate. Balls and strikes will be called after the ball crosses the plate.
3. Once a call is made the decision is final. Only in an event of interpretation of the rules can any protest be addressed. At this time, both coaches should meet with the umpire to discuss the call. Protests cannot be made on judgment calls.
4. In the event of inclement weather, the Umpire will confer with the two Coaches as to continuation of play or delay. Under no situations will play continue or begin when thunder or lightning is present.

Coaching

1. Only the head Coach or designated head Coach will confer with the Umpire or be allowed to protest a call. The designated Coach will meet with the Umpire prior to game starting.
2. Coaches or parents (if cleared by your association) may coach first and third bases. One coach per base. A Coach cannot touch a player to get them to advance to second or home. If a player is touched to encourage them to advance, the runner is out.

Forfeits

1. A forfeit will be declared if there are less than eight players present from a team ten minutes after the scheduled start of the game.

Protests

1. Any protest has to be filed with the Division Coordinator within 24 hours following the end of the game being protested. A protest committee will consist of the Division Coordinator and two members of the Board of Directors.
2. Protests must concern matters of misinterpretation of a playing rule, failure of the coach (umpire) to apply the correct rule to a given situation, or failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation. Protests concerning a judgment decision will not be considered.
3. Notification of intent to protest must be made immediately and before the next pitch.

Miscellaneous

1. No smoking or alcoholic beverages are permitted on the field. Suspension may result.
2. The Home Team is responsible for getting the bases and equipment out of the storage boxes prior to the game and for clean up after the game.
3. The Home Team will supply a new ball to the Umpire prior to the start of the game.
4. The Home Team has infield practice up to 15 minutes before the start of the game. The Visitors Team has the final 15 minutes.
5. The Home Team scorebook is the official scorebook. It is recommended that each team compare scores. The Umpire does not keep score and will stand by the Home Team scorebook.
6. During games players and coaches are encouraged to stay on the bench, in the dugout or in the batting boxes.
7. Pitchers may not wear any yellow articles of clothing.

