

Spring 2008
Ocee Park Athletic Association
Babe Ruth League™ Softball

Softball Rules (All Leagues)
Farm, AA, Major, and Senior Softball

Babe Ruth League rules apply, in accordance with the *Babe Ruth Softball Rules and Regulations*, except for OPAA local league rules noted in this document for a specific age group. The 9-10 Player/Coach Pitch league (AA league) has adopted new rules based on the NGFA (North Georgia Fastpitch Association) Class "C" playing rules. These rules were implemented in several tournaments during Spring 2007 in which Ocee Park teams participated. Based on overwhelming positive feedback, the rules have been adopted for Spring and Fall season play in the 9-10 age group that utilizes coach/player pitch. Please read carefully the rules section for 9-10 softball as they are considerably different than previous seasons.

All players will be required to be in full uniform, consisting of matching jerseys, socks and long or short pants. The entire team must wear the same length and color of pants. Caps or visors are optional. However, if a cap or visor is worn, it must be the same for all players on a team.

Prior to each game, both Managers will meet with the Head Umpire at home plate to exchange lineup cards, at which time the Head Umpire will determine and announce the "Official Start Time" of the game. Forfeiture will occur when a team does not have the required number of players as of 15 minutes past the start time.

Visiting team will occupy the third base dugout and bat first.

Each player will play a minimum of half the innings in each game. **All players will sit out once (except starting pitcher if she remains in the game as pitcher) before any player sits out twice.**

Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning in an infield position per game (Catcher and pitcher constitute infield positions).

A manager can make free substitutions at any time during the game for any position except the pitcher. **A pitcher can be removed from the game and may re-enter as pitcher as many times as desired during the remainder of the game but re-substitution as a pitcher is only permitted once per inning.**

In order to maintain schedules, any game that has a tie score after the time limit has been reached or six innings have been played will be recorded as a

tie (half-win and half-loss). Extra inning games are not permitted unless time remains.

All players will bat 1-12 (or as dictated by the number of players present at the game) in the line up rotation regardless of whether or not they are scheduled defensively in any inning.

If a team member arrives after the start of the game, she is placed at the end of the batting order.

A base runner who intentionally contacts the catcher or a fielder for the purpose of separating her from the ball will be called out. If the umpire determines the contact was intentional and flagrant, the runner will be removed from the game. **Note:** If the infraction occurs at home plate, the run DOES NOT count.

A catcher or fielder not possessing the ball must concede the base path to the runner. If the defensive player contacts the runner without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called.

A team must have a minimum of seven (7) players to avoid forfeiture. Make every attempt to play the game regardless of the number of players although 7 players are required at the start of the game to avoid a forfeit. A team may share players with its opponent on defense if necessary to play a game. A team may also borrow players from another Spring softball team in the same age group although any borrowed players may not pitch in the game. Games in which borrowed or shared players are used count as a forfeit for the team that requires players. If neither team has sufficient players, the game does not count in the standings.

The 10-Run Rule (Mercy Rule) does not apply during the regular season but is applicable in the end of the season tournaments. Games will continue to the completion of the time limit. The game may terminate after the time limit has been reached if there is a margin of ten (10) runs or more regardless of which team is at bat.

A team shall be warned the first time a batter throws a bat. Each and every subsequent occurrence by any member of that team shall result in the batter being called (out at the discretion of the umpire).

Pitcher's Circle: *Babe Ruth League Rule 7.13 – When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive the delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball is released.*

OPAA Exception #1: In all 10U leagues (6-8 and 9-10), runners are not permitted to leave the base until the ball reaches the batter.

OPAA Exception #2: A team shall be warned the first time a base-runner leaves a base early (only in 6-8 & 9-10, no warning in Majors or Seniors).

Subsequent occurrences by any member of that team shall result in the base-runner being called out in accordance with *Babe Ruth League Rule 7.13*.

EQUIPMENT

All batters and base-runners in all divisions of Softball shall wear a batting helmet with a protective face mask attached.

Catchers must have a Dangling Throat Guard attached to their catcher's helmet. This includes "hockey" style catcher's helmets.

Mouthguards are mandatory for 1st and 3rd base fielders in all age groups. A mouthguard is also mandatory for pitchers. A face mask is an acceptable substitute for a mouthguard.

Run Limits/Time Limits/Base Stealing/Ball Size

6-8 Year Old Division (Farm League)

- Each half inning shall end after three (3) outs or four (4) runs have scored (except 1st inning – see below). There are no Open Innings.
- All batters will bat in the 1st inning regardless of outs or runs scored.
- Each team will provide an adult coach to operate the pitching machine. Each batter will receive five (5) pitches or three (3) strikes. If after five (5) pitches the batter does not hit safely, the batter is out. (Exception: the at-bat may not end on a foul ball).
- If a batted ball directly hits the pitching machine, it will be ruled a ground rule single. Batter is awarded first base.
- If a batted ball directly hits the coach operating the pitching machine, it will be ruled a "no pitch" and the batter will return to bat. Coaches must attempt to avoid contact with the ball.
- If a batted ball hits or is touched by a defensive player and then hits the pitching machine, it will be considered "in play" as long as the umpire judges that the player can retrieve it safely. If not, it will be ruled a ground rule single.
- No inning will start after 75 minutes (1 hour, 10 minutes).
- Stealing is not permitted.
- Leading-off is not permitted; however, base-runners may leave the base when the pitched ball crosses the plate.
- A maximum of one (1) extra base on an overthrow. A play may have at most one overthrow.
- Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning per game in an infield position.
- Machine pitch at a maximum speed of 40 mph from 35 feet. Note: all Babe Ruth 8U tournaments use a speed range of 32-34mph at 35 feet.
- 11-inch yellow softball.
- Bunting is not permitted.

9-10 Year Old Division (AA League) (NGFA Class "C" 9-10 Rules)

- Each half inning shall end after three (3) outs or the run limit is reached. The run limit is three (3) runs scored for innings 1-4 (or the first inning that begins following the completion of 1 hour of play) and eight (8) runs scored for innings 5-6 (or any full inning starting after the completion of 1 hour of play). This format will be used for weekday and weekend games.
- No inning will start after 80 minutes (1 hour 20 minutes).
- Stealing of 2nd and 3rd base is permitted. A runner is limited to one stolen base per play (even on overthrow) and a runner may not steal home.
- Dropped 3rd strike is not in effect.
- Leading-off is not permitted; however, base-runners may leave the base when the pitched ball crosses the plate.
- A maximum of one (1) extra base on an overthrow.
- Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning per game in an infield position.
- 35-foot player pitch.
- 11-inch yellow softball.
- Defensive shifts and infield stacking are not permitted. A team is limited to 6 infielders including the pitcher and catcher and all infielders must be placed in their standard locations according to their position. Outfielders must have one foot in the outfield grass when the pitch crosses home plate.
- **Coach Pitch:** Umpires will judge pitches from Player Pitchers as balls or strikes. Player pitchers are permitted to pitch to a batter until the batter strikes out, the ball is put into play, the batter is hit by a pitch, the batter is awarded 1st base by the umpire (i.e. interference), or the pitcher throws 5 pitches to a batter. The 5th pitch to a batter by the Player Pitcher is considered the final pitch unless there are 2 strikes on the batter in which case an additional pitch is permitted. Following the final pitch by the Player Pitcher, the Coach Pitcher replaces the Player Pitcher (there are no walks in the Player/Coach pitch format). With a 2 strike count, the Player Pitcher may continue to pitch to the batter until one of the above conditions is met. When a Coach Pitcher replaces a Player Pitcher, the coach is allowed to pitch to the batter only the number of strikes remaining in the count (i.e. 2 pitches with a 3-1 count, 1 pitch with a 3-2 count). On the final pitch permitted by a Coach Pitcher, the ball must be put into play (or fouled off) or the batter is called out. Foul balls with a 2 strike count under Coach Pitch are treated as they are under Player Pitch and the batter is given another pitch. Batters hit by a pitch from a Player Pitcher may be awarded 1st base but batters hit by a pitch from a Coach Pitcher may NOT be awarded 1st base and furthermore, the pitch counts as a strike in the Coach Pitcher format. **Note:** see the NGFA Class "C" Rules, Section XI, 10U-C Pitching Rule Modification for more information and

examples. This document can be found on the Ocee Park web site as part of the **COACHES CORNER** page.

11-12 Year Old Division (AAA/Major In-Park League)

- Each half inning shall end after three (3) outs or the run limit is reached. The run limit is three (3) runs scored for innings 1-4 (or the first inning that begins following the completion of 1 hour of play) and eight (8) runs scored for innings 5-6 (or any full inning starting after the completion of 1 hour of play). This format will be used for weekday and weekend games.
- No inning will start after 80 minutes (1 hour, 20 minutes).
- Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning per game in an infield position.
- Base stealing is permitted once the ball is released by the pitcher.
- Dropped 3rd strike is in play.
- Stealing of home is permitted.
- On-deck batters are permitted.
- 40-foot player pitch.
- 12-inch yellow softball.
- **Note:** these rules are identical to the 11-12 Majors NGFA league with the exception of the mandatory infield play rule.

11-12 Year Old Division (Majors NGFA League)

- The Majors NGFA League will play all games, both intra-league and inter-league according to the NGFA Class "C" rules for the 12U age group.
- NGFA Class "C" rule for 12U play are posted on the Ocee Park Coaches Corner web site and can also be found on the web site for the North Georgia Fast Pitch Association: <http://www.northgeorgiafastpitch.com/>
- **Note:** the rules utilized for Majors NGFA are identical in most respects to those used in the Majors In-Park League with the exception of time limits (see above for rule highlights for the 12U age group under the Majors In-Park heading).

13-16 Year Old Senior Division (See separate rules posting)

- Rules for this division are determined by the Spring 2008 InterLeague rules adopted by Murphey Candler, Ocee Park, and Sandy Springs. See separate document on the Ocee Park Coaches Corner web site for Spring 2008 InterLeague rules.