



MANATEE SOFTBALL LITTLE LEAGUE SPECIFIC RULES

ALL AGE GROUPS

1. USSSA rules will be followed.
 - A. Modifications listed below supersede USSSA rules.
2. All girls will play a **minimum** of 2 innings per game.
3. No player may sit consecutive defensive innings, except for an injury.
4. All players present at the game must be in the batting order.
 - A. If a player's arrival is delayed, the opposing team should be notified, player moved to the last batter in the lineup, and after the completion of their at bat, or the 1st inning, will be ineligible to play.
5. A minimum of 8 players is necessary for a game to be played. Each team must field a team of 8 or more players by the official game start time. If a team cannot, the following applies:
 - A. **Regular Season** – the coach can borrow outfielders from the opposing team and no outs will be recorded.
 - B. **Playoffs** – you may not borrow outfielders from the opposing team & you must have a minimum of 8 players from your original roster.
 - i. An out will be taken in the 9th or 10th spot in the lineup (age division determined).
 - ii. If you are unable to field a team of 8 the game will end in a forfeit.
6. Game Time
 - A. Official game time is 1 hour and 15 minutes **OR** 7 complete innings, whichever comes first.
 - B. For age groups with the 5-run rule, the game ends as follows:
 - i. If the home team is batting at the end of regulation time:
 1. The home team has the lead, the game will stop when time expires.

2. If the home team is trailing or is tied:
 - a. If the home team trails by 5 runs or less or is tied at the start of the at bat, the game will end at the conclusion of their at-bat or when the home team takes the lead.
 - b. If the home team starts their at-bat trailing by more than 5 runs, the game ends when regulation time expires.
 - ii. If the visiting team is batting at the end of regulation:
 1. If the visiting team is leading:
 - a. If the visiting team leads by more than 5 runs, the game ends when regulation time expires.
 - b. If the lead is 5 runs or less, the inning will continue. If, at any point, the visiting team extends the lead to more than 5 runs, the game ends. If, at the end of the visitor's at-bat the visitors' lead is 5 runs or less, the inning continues, and the game will end when the home team finishes their at-bat or takes the lead.
 2. If the visiting team trails or is tied:
 - a. If the visiting team was trailing by more than 5 runs at the start of their at-bat and game time expires, the game ends.
 - b. If the visiting team was trailing by 5 runs or less or was tied:
 - i. If, at the conclusion of the visitor's at-bat, the still trail, the game ends at that point.
 - ii. If the visitors have tied the game or taken the lead, the inning continues, and the game will end when the home team finishes their at-bat or takes the lead.
7. During the regular season, games may end in a tie.
8. During the playoffs: the International Tie Breaker will be used to determine the winner.
- A. **International Tie Breaker:** the game continues into the next inning with the last batter of the previous inning, whose turn at bat had been completed, starting at 2nd base. After playing a complete inning, if a team has the lead, the game is over. If the game is still tied, additional innings are played until the winner has been determined.
9. **Playoff Seeds** – seeds are determined by the order of finish during the regular season. For all playoff games up to the finals, the higher-seeded team will be the “home” team. Once the championship is reached, the team who makes it into the championship game through the winner's bracket shall be the “home team for the 1st game. A coin toss will be used if there is a second “IF” game.

10. Regular Season Tie Breaker for Seed Seating

- A. If at the end of the season, two teams are tied in an age group division, the following order will be used to determine the season champion and number 1 seed for the end of year tournament.
 - i. Runs against, the team that has allowed the least amount of runs to be scored against them by all teams in the age division.

- ii. Runs for, the team that has scored the most runs against all teams in the age division.
- iii. If tied, a One game playoff to be played as field space and time provided (determined by the board).

11. **Two-pitcher Rules:** Any age group with the two-pitcher rule will have the innings pitched, counted by outs.

- A. An inning consists of 3 outs **OR** five runs (if a 5-run rule is used in the age group).
- B. A pitcher must finish any batter she started except where an injury to the pitcher has taken place.
- C. A pitcher who was relieved may re-enter as the pitcher only 1 time per inning.
- D. This rule is intended to relieve pitchers who are struggling and to keep the game moving. It shall not be used as a device to manipulate the game.

12. No team shall use the infield for practice (batting or fielding) prior to the start of a game. The infield will be defined as the dirt between the foul lines. All practice should be confined to the outfield (grass) areas, dirt areas outside of foul lines, bullpen areas or to the batting cages.

13. No unassessed pitcher may pitch in the playoffs (end of season tournament) that have not pitched in at least **3 games** during the regular season.

- A. **All** unassessed pitchers who become playoff eligible will be reviewed and voted on by coaches
 - i. All coaches must vote & be unanimously agreed upon prior to the start of playoff games.
- B. If an unassessed pitcher is determined (by coaches' vote) to have been an "A" pitcher at the time of the draft, the pitcher will not be allowed to pitch in the playoffs if the pitcher was not identified as an "A" pitcher by the coaches at the draft. This rule hopes to encourage all pitchers to assess and discourage hiding an "A" pitcher.
- C. Coaches are required to request the eligibility exception within **48 hours prior** the first playoff game of the bracket (this is not specific to the team's first game)
- D. Coaches, please record all pitchers used in a game.

14. In all divisions, the USSSA Mercy (Run) rule WILL be used for regular season games as well as playoff games.

- A. **Mercy Rule** – will follow the 12 runs at the end of 3rd inning, 10 runs at the end of 4th inning and 8 runs at the end of 5th inning.
- B. **Regular Season** – game play will continue until time runs out, but score will be recorded when Mercy Rule occurs and scoring of remaining game time will cease.
- C. **Playoff Season** – full Mercy rule will be in effect and the game will end when Mercy Rule has occurred.

15. **Player Substitutions/Courtesy Runners:**

- A. Courtesy Runners are permitted due to injury during the current at bat, once they reach first base.
 - i. Pitcher/Catcher of record courtesy runners are not permitted.

Age Group Modifications

13+ Division

1. The pitchers' mound will be at 43 feet.
 - a. It is the home field coach's responsibility to set the mound to this distance prior to the game.
2. The 5-run rule per inning will be used.
3. Infield fly rule will be in effect
4. Any batter hit by pitch will take the base.

12U Division

1. The pitcher mound will be at 40 feet.
 - a. It is the home field coach's responsibility to set the mound to this distance prior to the game.
2. The 5-run rule per inning will be used.
3. Infield fly rule will be in effect
4. During the regular season, every girl must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield, each game.
 - a. This rule will not be used in the playoffs.
5. Any batter hit by a pitch has the option to take 1st base or continue batting.
 - a. Coaches should strongly encourage hit batters to continue batting if they are able.
 - b. However, during the playoffs, all hit batters will take the base.
6. Each team must use a minimum of 2 pitchers per game.
 - a. No pitcher may pitch a third inning until the 4th inning.
 - b. No pitcher may pitch more than 3 innings.
 - i. This rule supersedes general rule 11.
 - c. This rule will not be in effect for playoffs.
7. No more than 6 defensive players may be permitted in the infield prior to the release of the pitch. The infield for the purposes of this rule will be defined as the dirt part of the playing field.

10U Division

1. The pitchers' mound will be at 35 feet.
 - a. It is the home field coach's responsibility to set the mound to this distance prior to the game.
2. The 4-run rule per inning will be used.
3. During the regular season, every girl must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield each game.
 - a. This rule will not be used in the playoffs.
4. There will be **NO** infield fly rule.
5. Each team must use a minimum of 2 pitchers per game.
 - a. No pitcher may pitch a third inning until the 4th inning.
 - b. No pitcher may pitch more than 3 innings.
 - i. This rule supersedes general rule 11.
 - c. This rule will not be in effect for playoffs.
6. Runners may steal.
 - a. A runner attempting to steal may **NOT** advance beyond the stolen base on an overthrow. The stealing runner is considered in "jeopardy" and a run-down/play at first or second is allowed.
 - i. This rule will not apply in the event there is a passed ball or dropped pitch. Runners may advance at their own risk. Determination of "passed ball" will be at the discretion of the umpire.
 - b. No delay steals. It is a delayed dead ball on a delayed steal.
 - i. Runners may not advance on throws from the catcher to the pitcher when the pitcher is in the pitching circle.
 - c. Runners taking the lead on 3rd base may steal on a throw from catcher to 3rd base without tagging up.
7. One defensive coach may be in the outfield for the first half of the season only.
 - i. This coach may not be in the infield at any time except when time is called.
8. Any batter hit by a pitch as the option to take 1st base or continue batting.
 - i. Coaches should encourage hit batters to continue batting if they are able.
 - ii. During the playoffs, all hit batters will take the base.
9. No more than 6 defensive players may be permitted in the infield prior to the release of the pitch. The infield for the purposes of this rule will be defined as the dirt part of the playing field.
10. Teams can field up to 4 outfielders.
11. The dropped 3rd strike rule will be in effect.

8U Division

1. The pitchers' mound will be set at 35 feet.
 - a. It is the home field coach's responsibility to set the mound to this distance prior to the game.
2. The 5-run rule will be used.
3. During the regular season, each girl must play a **MINIMUM** of:
 - a. 1 inning in the infield during any game that is 3 innings or less.
 - b. 2 innings in the infield during each game that lasts 4 or more innings.
 - c. For the sake of this rule, the catchers' position will be considered an infield position.
 - d. This rule will not be used in the playoffs.
4. There will be **NO** infield fly rule.
5. A runner may not leave a base until the pitch reaches home plate.
 - a. A runner who leaves a base on a pitch is at liability to be put out, even on a non-batted ball. On a non-batted ball, the runner must immediately return to her original base. If the defense chooses not make a play on a runner (who fails to return to her original base), the Umpire may call "Time" and order her return to expedite pace of play.
6. Pitching
 - a. Pitching will be a combination of coach and player pitch during the first inning.
 - b. Coaches must pitch from 35 feet, in direct line with home plate and the pitching rubber. The "player pitcher" must have at least one foot in the circle drawn at 35 feet when the batter's coach is pitching.
 - c. In the first inning:
 - i. Players will pitch from 35 feet and get to throw 4 pitches with a softie ball. Strikes will be called on these pitches. The pitcher CAN strike out the batter.
 1. If the batter has not struck out during the 4 pitches from the opposing pitcher, the coach may pitch up to 3 additional pitches with a regular softball to complete the at-bat. The final pitch will continue if the player hits a foul ball.
 - d. Starting with the 2nd inning, the game will be all coach pitch.
 - i. The batter will receive five pitches or three swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. Each pitch will count as one of the five even if the batter does not swing. If the fifth pitch is hit (not bunted) foul the batter will remain at bat as long as they continue to foul off pitches.
 - ii. The batter is out on a third strike whether caught or uncaught.
 - iii. There shall be no Base on Balls (walk) awarded.
 - iv. Hitters hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base.
 - v. Bunting is NOT allowed. PENALTY: The ball is dead, and the batter is out if the ball is contacted. All other runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch
 - vi. Coach should make the batter aware that the 5th pitch is the last pitch
7. **Overthrows**

- a. There will be only one base allowed (not awarded) on the **FIRST** overthrow on a play. The one base is not automatically awarded, the player can still be called out on an executed play.
 - b. Any runners not being played on will also be controlled by the one base allowed. (i.e.: base runner at first, ball is hit, and batter runner proceeds towards first base, ball is overthrown – the runner from first base will have to stop at third (1+1 but the +1 is not guaranteed). Once the batter runner reaches second base or stops at first, play is dead for all runners.
 - c. Overthrows back to the pitcher, with the pitcher in the circle, after an overthrow to first will be dead ball, and no runner may advance.
 - i. Throws back to a pitcher after time has been called (Dead ball no runners may advance)
8. Time will be called when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner (stop progress of lead runner), or the ball is returned to the player-pitcher with at least one foot inside the circle (e.g., Request “time” from the umpire)
- a. If a runner is more than halfway to the next base when time is called, the runner will be awarded the next base. If they are not halfway to the next base when time is called, they will be returned to the previous base safely.
 - b. The defensive team may have a maximum of 3 defensive conferences per game.
9. Two defensive coaches may be in the outfield for the season.
10. One defensive coach will be positioned behind the catcher to help direct play and to return the ball to the pitcher when needed to speed up the game.
11. No more than 6 defensive players may be permitted in the infield prior to the release of the pitch. The infield for the purposes of this rule will be defined as the dirt part of the playing field.
12. Pitchers are prohibited from making a force out if the play is one that would normally be made with a throw. (Example- the ball is hit back to the pitcher in the circle. **The pitcher may not run to home plate or a base to make a force play**). The out will not count if a pitcher makes a force out.
13. Outfielders are to play in the outfield and must be in the grass area at the time of a pitch being made.
- a. Outfielders are not permitted to run to the infield for the purpose of calling time/stopping play.
 - i. A throw to the pitcher/player in front of the lead runner must be made
 - b. Outfielders are not permitted to make a play that would normally be made with a throw.
 - i. A force out at a base, that would call for a throw to be made
 - 1. This will be at the discretion of the umpire as to the scenario of the play.
 - 2. This will be a dead ball, and the out will not count.
14. Teams can field up to 4 outfielders.
15. No fielder, other than the catcher, may take a position in front of the pitcher prior to the ball being hit.
16. The drop 3rd strike rule will not be in effect.
17. The pitching coach must make an effort to avoid interfering with the play.
- a. If in the umpire’s judgment, a coach interferes unintentionally with the batted ball and/or defensive play, the ball will be declared dead and the pitch replayed.
 - b. If in the umpire’s judgment, a coach interferes intentionally, the lead runner is out and the play replayed.
 - i. If there are no runners, the batter is out.