

**Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association
Softball Rules Juniors (10U) League
(Supplement to USA Softball)**

The 10 and under rules of USA Softball apply, unless modified by this document.

General Game Information:

- A complete game is 6 innings.
- A new inning may not start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the scheduled start of the game.
- A game must end after 1 hour 50 minutes, regardless of where you are within the game.
- Teams should be assembled and ready to play 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- During the regular season, games may end in a tie if the time limit has expired.
- During tournament play, if a game ends in a tie, the International Tie Breaker (ITB) procedures will be used.
- A game is official if ending after three (3) complete innings, or 2 ½ if the home team is ahead. The score at the end of the last complete inning determines the winner.
- The home team should supply a new 11-inch softball. The visiting team should supply a ball of the same size in good condition.

Team Players

- A team must have 6 players present to start the game. Coach's discretion will be used to continue the game with less players.
- All players who step onto the field MUST be paid registrants of FHYAA softball.
- Nine players will play the field with no more than 4 infielders (1b, 2b, SS, 3b), excluding the pitcher, catcher, and outfielders. Shifts from the standard infield positions are not allowed.
- Outfielders must play in the outfield grass.
- If a team has 10 or more available players, a 4th outfielder may be used thus allowing ten (10) players total on the field at once.
- Coaches should try to ensure players rotate through as many positions as possible within a game, in keeping with the spirit of learning the game versus winning a game at this level.
- No player may sit out a second inning until every available player on the team has sat out an inning.
- Teams exchange batting orders before the start of the game.
- Teams shall bat their entire roster of players and must bat in a maintained order. An automatic out shall be assessed against a team batting out of order. Due to limited restroom facilities, umpires should use discretion for absent batters and may allow a batter to be skipped without penalty.

- Any player that leaves before the completion of a game must be identified before the game begins. Players arriving late will be placed at the end of the order.
- A half inning is complete when batting around is complete or 3 outs are executed, whichever occurs first.

Run Limit

- Maximum 4 runs per inning for first four innings.
- For fifth and later innings, maximum 8 runs per inning.

Equipment

- Infielders MUST wear fielders' masks.
- All helmets need to have chin straps and face masks.
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Home Team Responsibilities

- The Home team is responsible for lining and raking the field of play prior to the game.
- The home team must provide two game condition balls to the umpire (located in the Whitman shed).

Player Pitching

- Pitching distance is 35 feet.
- Pitchers are limited to two (2) innings of the first four (4) innings and may not pitch two consecutive innings thereafter. However, a pitcher may pitch the 3rd, 4th, & 5th innings in succession. Any pitch during an inning shall constitute a full inning of pitching (e.g., a pitcher who faces one batter in an inning has pitched one inning). A pitcher removed from the pitching position during an inning may not return that same inning.
- The pitching limit is still in effect should a game go into extra innings. This rule may be waived with the agreement of both head coaches. The waiver is intended to cover teams that only have one pitcher available.
- **The illegal pitch rule does NOT apply**, but the umpire may enforce without penalty. Enforcement should be for the purposes of education and should not unnecessarily slow game play. See addendum for what constitutes an illegal pitch.
- Pitchers MUST wear facemasks.
- All coaches should develop as many pitchers on their teams as possible, striving to have at least 1 player who can pitch a ball "over the plate" (on the fly) to a batter.
- A pitcher gets 5 warm-ups to start the game or when entering in relief; for successive innings she gets 3.
- A batter is automatically out on the third strike, regardless of whether the ball was caught by the catcher. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

- There are no walks with player pitching. Ball 4 does not entitle the batter to first base but shall result in the coaches pitching to their own batters. See next section for details.

Coach Pitching

- After a Ball 4 is called, the coach comes in to pitch for his/her team.
 - The coach must not come onto the field until the play is over, including any stealing.
 - When the coach comes out to pitch to a batter, the pitcher remains within the circle off to the side of the rubber.
 - The batter retains the number of strikes she had when ball 4 was thrown.
- The coach will pitch up to 4 pitches to her until:
 - The batter strikes out swinging based on count,
 - The batter strikes out on a called 3rd strike, or
 - The batter puts the ball in play.
 - If the batter fouls off the 4th pitch, she may continue to bat until one of the 3 above occurs.
- The home plate umpire is to call balls and strikes on all pitches by either the player or the coach in order to teach the batter the strike zone.
- While the coach pitcher is pitching, the defensive pitcher must have one foot in the circle and be no closer to home plate than the rubber.
- **Coach Pitch Interference:** The adult pitcher must not interfere with a hit ball or a defensive player attempting to make a play on a hit or thrown ball. If interference occurs, a dead ball will be declared. All runners must stop and return to the base they occupied just before the interference occurred.

Hitting

- Bunting is allowed. Some reminders:
 - Any missed attempt to bunt is a strike. The umpire shall determine if a batter removed an offer in time.
 - The batter is out on all failed (to include foul balls) bunt attempts when she has two strikes.
 - Bunting is not allowed during coach pitch in Interleague play. For Fort Hunt games, batters will be allowed to bunt during coach pitch. All other bunting rules remain in effect (i.e. a foul ball on strike 2 constitutes an out.)
- **Batter's Interference:** The batter must get out of the way if there is a defensive play at the plate.
 - If the batter does not, and in the umpire's judgment the batter had interfered with the defensive team's attempt to put out a runner, the batter is out and all runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.
 - This rule does not apply when a batter interferes with the catcher's throw to the pitcher. In this situation, the ball is dead and no runner may advance.

- **Thrown Bats will be called as outs.** The first thrown bat by either team will result in a warning to both teams; the second thrown bat by any player will result in the player being called out.
- **Hit by Pitch (HBP):** If the pitch hits the batter, then the batter is awarded first base. Batters should try to get out of the way of a pitched ball, but the base is awarded automatically. If the batter is hit by the pitch while swinging and missing, it is considered HBP and first base is awarded. There is no HBP when the coach is pitching. Batters hit by the pitch can elect to continue batting. In this case, the pitch hitting the batter is called a ball even if the batter swing and misses.

Base Running/Stealing

- The play is considered dead once the ball returns to the pitcher within the pitcher's circle.
- Stealing is permitted. Base runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Interleague specifies when the ball crosses the plate, but most umpires and teams will agree to the less restrictive rule during pre-game instructions.
- **Stealing is limited to one base per batter and runners may not advance on overthrows.**
 - For example, a runner stealing 2nd may not advance to 3rd unless the ball is batted into play, or a new batter comes to the plate.
 - The purpose of this rule is to encourage catchers to make a play on the steal in preparation for age advancement.
- The penalty for leaving the base early will be to return to the base after the play has ended, unless the base runner gets thrown out attempting to advance to another base, in which case she is out.
- On a walk, the batter-runner can continue past first base to steal second base.
- Head-first sliding and sliding into 1st Base are NOT allowed.
- A courtesy runner is allowed for the catcher who is on base with 2 outs. The substitute runner will be the person who made the last batted out. The purpose of this option is for the catcher to put on her gear for the change of sides.
- There is no stealing when the coach is pitching.
- Runners may steal home at any time after the pitch crosses home plate, but before the ball is in the pitcher's control in the pitcher's circle. This can be on a passed ball or if the catcher overthrows the pitcher. A passed ball is defined as any pitch not caught cleanly by the catcher.

Fielding/Defense

- Play ends when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle to end play. At this point, base runners not on a base must immediately (after 1 second) move to either the base in front of them or the base they have just touched. Any base runner that does not immediately move to a base shall be called out.

- The pitcher can make a play on any base runner off the base, but if she does, other base runners may advance at risk of being put out.
- **Dropped 3rd Strike rule does not apply.**
- **Infield fly rule does not apply** (i.e., the results of the play are based on what fielders & runners actually do).
- Runners must return to their original base if the pop fly is caught and can be doubled up if they do not; they can advance if they tag up.

Adverse Weather Conditions

A game may be temporarily delayed if it is raining or if lightning is seen. In the case of lightning, players are to immediately go to cars or shelter with a roof. No game can restart until 30 minutes after lightning is last seen. If a game is delayed, the scheduled end time will be extended by the amount of the delay.

Notes on Illegal Pitches (Umpire may enforce, but without penalty)

Hand position

- The pitcher must assume the pitching position, stepping onto the rubber, with the ball in either hand with the hands separated. Both hands cannot be in the glove.
- Walking on to the pitching plate with your hands together is a violation.
- The hands must come together in front of the body for about one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
- While legally on the pitching plate putting your hand in your glove and taking the ball out without delivering a pitch is a violation. This is a balk and will result in the call of a Ball being awarded the batter.
- If you take the ball out and begin your motion it is a violation if you make a second touch as part of your delivery.

Foot placement

Both feet should both be on the rubber at the start of the pitch.

- The foot that relates to the pitching hand (the pivot foot) should be forward of the rubber, with at least the heel on the rubber. The toe can be dug into the ground in order to push off the plate.
- The foot that relates to the glove hand should be slightly back with the toes planted on the rubber.



- The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitching plate to begin the pitch. Breaking contact with the pitching plate with the front foot constitutes a step and is a violation.
- The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and **drag** away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground.

Hopping during the pitch

- A hop, leap or jump is when the pivot foot comes up off the pitcher's plate while the other foot is still in the air.
- When the pivot foot comes up and off the pitching plate and lands in front of the pitching plate rather than dragging away, it is a violation.
- Any part of your delivery that results in your pivot foot coming off the ground before the other (non pivot) foot lands is a violation.
- When both feet are airborne at the same time, it is classified as a leap, no matter how small. Any space under the pivot foot higher than the level of the ground is a violation.
- A.S.A. stipulates that if a hole has been created, the pivot foot may drag no higher than the level plane of the ground. (The toe should point down as it does when walking or running).