

**Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association
Softball Rules Minors (12U) League
(Supplement to USA softball)**

The 12 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 and 50 minutes.
- 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. See ITB addendum at bottom.
- If the game is shortened due to adverse weather conditions or darkness, the game shall be official if three (3) full innings have been played, or if 2 ½ innings have been played and the home team is ahead.

Team Players

- A team must have 7 players present to start the game.
 - If by fifteen minutes after the scheduled start of the game a team does not have this minimum number of players, the game shall be declared a forfeit.
 - If a team will be short players for a game, the coach may use players from the 10U league to play in that game.
 - Any deviations **MUST** have the explicit permission of the League Commissioner.
- 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 three outfielders. Shifts from the standard infield positions are not allowed.
- Outfielders must play a reasonable distance from the infield, as determined by the umpire.
- Teams exchange batting orders before the start of the game. Every available player must bat in a maintained order. An automatic out shall be assessed against a team batting out of order.
- Any player that leaves before the completion of a game must be identified before the game begins.
- If a player leaves the game early and was not identified at the time of the lineup exchange, that spot in the order will be an out (except in the event of an injury).
- Players arriving late will be placed at the end of the order.

- No player should sit out 2 innings before every player has sat out 1 inning, except for disciplinary reasons.
- Each player should play defense for at least 2 of the first four innings for which she is available to play to ensure adequate playing time for each player.
- Each player should play at least one inning in the infield.

Run Limit

- Maximum 4 runs per inning per team for the first four innings;
- For the 5th and later innings, runs are capped at 8 runs per team after the 5th inning.

Equipment

- Pitchers and infielders must wear fielders' masks.
- All helmets must have face masks.

Home team responsibilities

- Volunteers from the Home team are 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.

Pitching

- Pitching distance is 40 feet.
- A pitcher may pitch four innings maximum, limited to two of the first four innings. A pitcher may pitch the 3rd, 4th, and 5th innings consecutively but may not then pitch the 6th inning.
- A pitcher removed from the pitching position during an inning may not return that same inning but may return later in the game.
- 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 may be enforced with or without penalty with the agreement of both coaches and the umpire.**
- There shall be no intentional walks. The pitcher must pitch to the batter.
- Travel players may pitch one inning and only if there is an equivalent number of travel pitchers on the opposing team.
 - This can be adjusted with approval of both coaches if the game goes into extra innings.
 - This limitation does NOT apply to house pitchers who happen to play another position in travel.

- The goal is to develop better house pitchers, not replace them with ringers from travel, so house pitchers should also be equally rotated into the pitching line up.

Hitting

- Bunting is permitted. A few reminders:
 - Any missed attempt to bunt is a strike. The umpire shall decide if a batter removed her offer in time to avoid a strike.
 - The batter is out on all failed (to include foul balls) bunt attempts when she has 2 strikes.
- **The “Look Back Rule” applies.**
 - When a batter gets a hit, play is live until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the eight foot radius around the pitcher’s mound.
 - Once possession is made, all runners may only stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or advance to the next base.
 - Failure to immediately return nonstop to the base or proceed to the next base will result in a runner being called out.
 - Once a runner stops at a base for any reason they will be declared out if they leave that base.
 - Exception: The runner will not be declared out if a play is made on her or another runner. (A fake throw is considered a play)
- **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.

Base Running

- Unlimited stealing is permitted. Runners may not leave the bases until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
- On a walk, the batter-runner can continue past first base to steal second base.
- **Drop third strike is in effect.**
 - This occurs when there are two outs or fewer, and first base is empty.
 - The batter can run when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground.
- A courtesy runner is allowed for an oncoming pitcher or catcher who is on base with 2 outs. The substitute runner will be the person who made the last out. The purpose of this option is for the catcher to put on her gear for the change of sides.

Fielding/Defense

- **The infield fly rule DOES apply.** When first and second or first, second and third are occupied before there are two outs and the umpire declares “infield fly” due to a fly ball in the infield, the batter is automatically out and runners should be coached not to advance.
- This does not include line drives or bunts. The ball is still live and all other rules are in effect.

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

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).

International Tie Breaker Rule

In softball, games are limited by innings or playing time. But games don't always end there. If the game is tied after either of these two limits is reached, play continues.

- At the top of the next inning (when the visiting team is up to bat), and each half inning after that, **the team on offense will start the inning with a runner on second base.**
- This runner is the batter who is scheduled to bat last in that particular inning. For example, if the number-two batter leads off the inning, the number-one batter will serve as the runner on second base.
- This runner may be substituted, allowing a team to place a faster runner on second. However, the coach must be careful of substitution rules.
- Play commences with the additional runner on base at the start of each inning half, giving more possibilities for scoring during the inning.
- Innings continue on, played in full, with additional runners on base at the start of each side's play, until the inning is complete and there is no longer a tie.

Read more at: <http://softball.isport.com/softball-guides/how-to-run-the-tiebreaker-in-softball>