

Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association
Softball Rules 8U League
(Supplement to USA Softball)

General Game Information

- A complete game is 4 innings.
- All games will end (drop dead time) in 1 hour and 25 minutes, regardless of where you are within the game.
- No new inning will start after 1 hour 15 minutes into the game.
- Teams should be assembled and ready to play 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- If the game is shortened due to adverse weather conditions or darkness, the game shall be official if 3 full innings have been played.
- The field should be set up with 60' bases.
- 11" Hard Balls will be used for games. If a Defensive Team prefers to use "softie" balls, they may supply them for use only when that team is on defense.

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.
- Players will be rotated to different defensive positions each inning. No player will be allowed to play the same defensive position more than once each game, unless there is a safety issue.
- No umpires are assigned to 8U games. Coaches/Assistants will umpire their own teams.

Batting

- Coaches will decide if the batter should start from a Tee or receive pitches. As much as possible, players should start with a pitched ball.
- Each batter will receive a maximum of five pitches. The emphasis is five pitches, not five swings. Please do not pitch more than 5 pitches because more pitches will slow down the game.
- The Pitching coach will release the ball in front of the circle around the pitching rubber.
- Foul balls and bad pitches are part of the five pitches.
- If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will then move to the Tee.
- Each batter will take a maximum of three swings from the Tee.
- If the batter does not put the ball in play after three swings from the Tee, the batter is called out.
- All batters must wear a helmet.

- There is no bunting allowed at this level. Any accidental bunt will be considered as a foul ball.
- Any ball that stays inside the base lines is fair and playable except if it is not hit beyond the semi-circle drawn 5 feet from home plate. Any ball that ends up within this semi-circle is a foul ball.
- Batters should be taught to hit and drop the bat rather than throw the bat after hitting the ball. Coaches must ensure that the batter takes her swings safely.
Every available player must bat in a maintained order each inning. An automatic out shall be assessed against a team batting out of order. The half inning is over, regardless of the number of “outs,” when the last batter in the lineup takes her turn at bat.
- When the last batter in the lineup comes up to bat in any inning, the Coach of the team that is batting will clearly announce to the fielding team/coaches that this is the “last batter” prior to the player’s at bat.
- Under the “last batter rule” once the last batter has gotten a hit, all runners (to include the batter) may circle all the bases in an attempt to “score” regardless of the ball’s location. The fielding team must attempt to get one or more of the runners out on the bases first, and then may throw the ball to the catcher in an attempt to get an out at home. The dropped 3rd strike and infield fly rules do NOT apply.

Base Running

- All base runners must wear a helmet.
- There is no stealing allowed. The runners may not leave the base until the ball passes over the plate or is hit by the batter.
- Sliding is allowed, but you may not slide into 1st base or slide headfirst.
- Once an infielder or outfielder retrieves a hit ball and throws the ball toward any defensive player, or an infielder with the ball touches a base, base runners can advance only to the base that they are running to at the time the ball is thrown, or the base was touched.
 - Exception: When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners must advance to home unless they are put out by the defense.
- If the ball is overthrown, players may not advance beyond the base to which they are running.
 - Exception: Rule does not apply when the last batter of the inning hits.
- Play stops when all base runners are on a base.
- 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 second out. The purpose of this option is for the catcher to put on her gear for the change of sides.

Defense/Fielding

- There is no limit on the number of defensive coaches allowed on the field during a game, but coaches must allow room for the players to play.

- The duties of the defensive coaches include ensuring that all defensive players are in the proper defensive positions before the coach pitches or the ball is placed on the tee, including the outfielders staying in the outfield, infielders in the proper place, and catcher in the proper place.
- Coaches should help the players avoid the tendency to move closer to the plate throughout the inning.
- All players are in the field at the same time, no players “sit the bench”.
- Six players are allowed to play in the infield (1st, 2nd, 3rd, SS, P, C); all other players must play in the outfield.
- Outfielders must play in the grass.
- Coaches shall encourage players to make a defensive play and return the ball as quickly as possible to the pitcher’s circle.

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.