**2022 District 7 Minors Softball Rules**

**1.00 - The League**

1.01 The league will be governed by the 2021 Official Little League Softball Regulations and Playing Rules.

1.02 Local rule exceptions are listed below.

1.03 Youth umpires (under 18 years of age) will be provided an adult “Game Coordinator” to assist and intervene with any unsportsmanlike matters that arise.

**2.00 - Game Preliminaries**

2.01 All weekday and weekend games will begin sharply as scheduled.

2.02 A 15-minute grace period will be granted if a team cannot field the required number of players at game time (See Rule 2.05).

2.03 An inning may not begin later than 1 hour 45 mins after the start time. An inning may begin just prior to the 1 hour 45 min end time and finish to completion unless the coaches decide due to weather or darkness that the players’ safety is at risk and the inning cannot be completed. (See Rule 2.13).

2.04 Games are planned to last 6 innings, but may be called official after 3 ½ innings (home team is ahead), 4 innings (visiting team is ahead) due to unsuitable weather or darkness. Games must last a minimum of 4 innings, time permitting.

2.05 Games may begin with 8 players and continue with as few as 6 players after the start of the game. Teams should share players if necessary to get the game in.

2.06 All players must be in the batting lineup, regardless if they are playing the field or not (continuous batting order).

2.07 Ten players will play in the field on defense. (Four outfielders, L, LC, RC, R). No short fielders are allowed.

2.08 All outfielders must be on the outfield grass at the start of every pitch.

2.09 Free substitutions are allowed for field players including the pitcher.

2.10 Each player must play at least 3 innings in a 6-inning game. If it is required to have players on the bench while on defense, because a team’s roster is greater than ten players, no player shall sit out more than one inning until all the players have sat out at least one inning.

2.11 A maximum of 4 runs scored will be allowed in one inning (4 runs or 3 outs, whichever come first).

2.12 If a later inning cannot be completed, due to weather or darkness and the game has gone more than 4 innings, revert back to the last complete inning for the final score.

2.13 Home team will supply 2 new game balls prior to the game. Visiting team will also provide two game balls while on defense. Each team will use their own game balls on defense per Covid rules.

2.14 Players must be in full uniforms with their jerseys tucked in. The player is representing the league and should look neat and appropriate.

2.15 No more than 4 coaches are allowed in the dugout. 2.17 Two base coaches shall be adults.

2.16 One coach (adult) must remain in the dugout with the players at all times.

2.17 If umpires are not provided for the game, coach for the team at bat will be the field umpire for that half inning, positioned behind the pitcher to call balls and strikes. Same coach will pitch to their own team when required (see 5.02). Note: If umpire is provided, coach for team at bat must still be in the field, to relieve the pitcher if necessary.

2.18 Home team will be in the first base side dugout; visiting team will be in the third base side dugout. (not necessary)

2.19 Visiting team will take 15 minutes of pre-game infield practice first, the home team will take 15 minutes of pre-game infield practice and then the game will begin.

2.20 No defensive player will be allowed to play more than 3 innings at any one defensive position in a 6-inning game. (Example - no player can play shortstop the entire game). The only exception shall be the catcher.

2.21 All players must play at least 2 innings in the infield in a six inning game except per 2.22. Valid infield positions (Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, 3B, and SS).

2.22 It is mandatory that any softball player in an infield position MUST wear a face mask. Failure to have a face mask will mean that the player can only play an outfield position during the game. (RH Specific Rule)

**3.00 - The Runner**

3.01 All base runners must wear helmets.

3.02 Sliding, feet first only, is allowed.

3.03 On a play at home, the runner must avoid a collision by giving herself up or sliding. If there is a play at the home plate resulting in a collision, the runner is out. If there is no play at the plate but still a collision, it will be ruled fielder’s interference and the runner is safe.

3.04 Base runner cannot leave the base until pitch crosses the plate.

3.05 Stealing is only allowed for a base runner at 2nd attempting to steal 3rd. If, during the attempted put out of the runner stealing third, an overthrow/error occurs, the play is dead and the runner is not allowed to advance home. Stealing of 2nd base is not permitted. In the case of runners at 1st & 2nd, only the runner at second may steal, and the runner at 1st may not advance if there is an overthrow to 3rd base from the catcher attempting to throw the runner out. Stealing is allowed from 3rd to home (passed ball) twice per inning only

3.06 On a passed ball or wild pitch (at home plate), the base runner is not allowed to advance. The ball must be within the reach of the catcher to attempt a steal.

3.07 Overthrow

a) For an overthrow at 1st or 3rd base where the ball leaves fair territory, the runners are allowed to safely advance 1 base.

b) For an overthrow that remains in fair territory, the runner(s) can advance at their own risk for 1 base. If an attempt to get the runner out results in another overthrow, the runner(s) can advance at their own risk to the next base.

c) Advancing on an overthrow is not permitted during a steal play, as defined in 3.05.

**4.00 - The Batter**

4.01 No on-deck batters are allowed. No player may swing a bat unless they are in the batter's box. No player may hold a bat until they walk out to the batter’s box for their at-bat. 4.02 Any player throwing a bat will receive a warning the first time, will be declared out the second time and will be declared out and removed from the game the third time.

4.03 After the 4th run in an inning is scored, the half inning is over once the ball is in control in the pitching circle. If the final play of the inning results in more than 4 runs scored prior to the ball in the pitching circle, only the 4th run counts toward the team’s score. (Example – 4 runs already scored in an inning, bases loaded, batter hits a ball to outfield gap. Teams should play it out without regard to the 4-run rule, but only the first run of the play counts toward the score.)

4.04 Bunting is allowed. No “show and smash” (i.e. once a girl shows bunt, she must bunt or take the pitch).

4.05 If a batter is hit by a pitch and the batter makes an effort to get out of the way, the batter will be awarded first base. If the batter makes no effort to get out of the way the pitch will be counted as a ball and the coach may relieve the pitcher of that batter. This will be done at the coach’s discretion.

4.06 One walk per inning is allowed in the minor league. After 4 balls, one batter will take their base. A coach will relieve the pitcher on the second 4th ball count of the inning and every 4 ball count thereafter (see rule 5.02) to continue the at-bat until the ball is put into play or the hitter strikes out.

**5.00 - The Pitcher**

5.01 The pitcher will throw from the “power phase” position – shoulders in line with home plate and second base. Pivot foot should be 35’ from home plate – for a 40’ pitching rubber, this would be near the front and within the pitching circle. For safety reasons, the pitcher is never allowed to have her pivot foot outside the pitching circle.

5.02 The pitcher will be relieved from pitching after their second 4 balls to a batter in any inning. The coach will continue to pitch to the batter with a count reset to one strike if there was previously one strike on the batter (i.e. no ball and one strike). There are no “coach walks” at this level; the goal is for the batters to put the ball into play, which benefits the hitters and the fielders.

5.03 In the interest of moving the games along, the coaches may elect upon mutual agreement to pitch entire innings or portions thereof. The coach will pitch to their own team and the pitcher will remain on the mound to field all balls and end all plays.

5.04 If a pitcher hits 5 batters during a game, she will be removed at the end of the inning that she hit the 5th batter. This is only if the opposing manager feels it is a safety issue for his/her players, and request that the pitcher be removed.

5.05 A pitcher must wear a face mask.

**6.00 – The Catcher**

6.01 While a player is pitching, the catcher will be backed up by a coach, positioned against the backstop, to assist in retrieving passed balls, to speed the game along. The coach will only provide assistance when there are no runners on base.