

Denville Summer Softball League

2020 Rules

Updated: April 7, 2020

These league rules will be reviewed and accepted at the pre-season coaches meeting. Rules shall be followed, without alteration, at all regular season and playoff games.

Documentation Requirements:

Each team must provide a completed Team Registration form (coach contacts information, home field availability, team blackout dates, and team rosters), and a copy of their insurance certificate to the league prior to or at the coaches meeting. Birth Certificates or official age verification cards must be in the coach's possession during games. ***Teams found using players that are too old for the division in which they are participating will be immediately removed from the league without refund.***

Schedules:

The Denville Summer Softball League will publish initial schedules based on the information received for field availability and blackout dates. Submitting too many blackout dates may result in a team receiving an incomplete or imbalanced schedule. The league will schedule season games with a goal of 50% home games and 50% away games. Once the schedules are created, they will not be modified unless there is an error. It is up to the home team to schedule fields and umpires. The home team is also responsible to reschedule makeup games directly with their opponent. If either team cannot make a scheduled game, they must notify the opposing coach with a phone call at least 24 hours prior to the start of the game. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit.

Directions:

Directions to fields are available on the Denville Website (www.denvillesoftball.org). Click on the "Locations" link to access the directions. If your home fields are not listed or if you have more complete directions, email them to ITdirector@denvillesoftball.org prior to June 6th.

Team Composition:

Teams must submit a roster which includes players name, number, town, and age. A maximum of 15 players can be on the roster. If a single program is registering teams for multiple age groups, players rostered on younger age group teams may play up during the regular season and do not need to be listed on both rosters. No players may play up during the playoffs. If a single program is registering multiple teams in one age group at least one team must be registered as an 'A' team. Players on a 'B' team roster may play on the 'A' team, but not vice versus.

Equipment:

- Game Balls
 - Each team will provide one game ball for both home and away games
 - Game balls shall be ASA approved leather with .47 core and 375 lbs compression
 - Softball (8U & 10U) - 11" optic yellow
 - Softball (12U, 14U, & 16U) - 12" optic yellow
- Bats - Bats must be ASA approved with a date of 2004 or later. Use of a non-approved bat will result in the batter being called out
- Helmets - Helmets with face masks are required for all batters

Field Setup:

- Bases – The distance between bases will be 60'
- Pitching Distance (8U) – The coaches will pitch to their own hitters and will pitch from 35' The defensive player playing the pitching position must be positioned with one foot in the pitching circle and no closer than 35' at the time of the pitch.
- Pitching Distance (10U) – 35'
- Pitching Distance (12U) – 40'
- Pitching Distance (14U & 16U) – 43'

Game Play – Babe Ruth Rules with the following exceptions/clarifications:

- All games between teams in different conferences (A v B) shall follow the B League rules.
- Defense:
 - Players (8U & 10U) – 10 players in field, free substitution, reentry rule not in affect, substitutions need not be announced. Only 6 players are allowed to be positioned in the infield at the start of the play. When playing on a field with larger than 60' base paths, the infield extends 10 feet beyond the bases.
 - (8U) – outfielders may move into the infield on contact/pitch reaching home plate
 - (10) – outfielders may move into the infield on release
 - Players (12U, 14U, & 16U) – 9 players in field; free substitution, reentry rule not in affect, substitutions need not be announced. If there are players not in the lineup, normal substitution rules apply.
 - Infield Fly & Dropped 3rd Strike (8U & 10U) – No Infield fly rule and no dropped third strike
 - Infield Fly & Dropped 3rd Strike (12U, 14U, & 16U) – Infield fly rule and dropped third strike are in affect.
- Pitching:
 - Re-entry – Pitchers can also re-enter the mound freely as long as they remain in the lineup. (i.e. – One pitcher can pitch Innings 1 & 4 another 2 & 5 and the third 3 & 6). Pitchers are only allowed to return to the mound once per inning.
 - Inning Limit – The league will not mandate, nor police inning limitations for pitchers. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure his/her pitchers are not overworked and that the pitching staff is being adequately developed.
 - Pitching Rules – Windmill pitching is allowed, Babe Ruth rules apply. Both feet must be in contact with the rubber at the start of the pitch. Stepping back off the rubber during the windup is not allowed.
 - Intentional Walks – No intentional walks without pitching to the batter.
 - Coach Pitch (8U) – Coaches will pitch to their own players. Walks are not allowed so balls and strikes will not be called. The batter shall be called out after three swinging strikes or after she receives six pitches and does not put the ball into play. If the sixth (or subsequent) pitch is fouled off, the batter shall be given an additional pitch. The coach who is pitching must make every effort to avoid interfering with the defensive play on a batted ball. If, in the umpire's judgment, the coach intentionally interferes with a defensive play or if the coach fails to make a good faith effort to avoid the interference, the play should be called dead, the batter shall be called out, and the runners shall return to the bases they occupied prior to the play. The coach who is pitching must remain silent from the start of the pitch until the end of the play.
- Batting:
 - Cinderella batting (8U & 10U) – all players in attendance bat. The additional players are treated as EP's and can freely substitute into the field. If a player must leave or is injured, the player is skipped in batting order without an automatic out being counted. If a player arrives late, she is added to bottom of batting order as an additional EP.
 - Optional Cinderella batting (12U, 14U, & 16U) - Teams have the option to bat Cinderella or use normal substitution rules. The choice must be communicated to the opposing coach prior to the start of the game and cannot be changed once the game starts. If batting Cinderella, all players in attendance bat. The additional players will be treated as EP's and can freely substitute into the field. If a player must leave or is injured, the player is skipped in the batting order without an automatic out being counted. If a player arrives late, she is added to the bottom of the batting order as an additional EP. If using normal substitution rules, starters may return to the game one time after being removed from the game and substitutes may not return to the game after being removed. If a player is injured and no substitute players are eligible to return to the game, the opposing coach may select the bench player to re-enter. If one of the players in the lineup gets injured or must leave early, a bench player must be substituted into the game or an automatic out will be recorded when the players spot is reached in the batting order.
 - Bunting (8U) – No bunting is allowed in 8U.
 - Fake Bunting (10U) - Fake bunting and then swinging away (slash) is not allowed in 10U play. The batter shall be called out for this offense.
 - Inning End (8U, 10U, 12UB) – There is a ten batter limit per inning. The inning will end after three outs are recorded or after ten batters come to the plate, whichever comes first. The

tenth batter will be announced and will bat as normal. The ensuing play will be treated as if there were two outs.

- Base Running:
 - Leading (8U) – Runners may not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate or is hit. The runner shall be called out if she leaves the base early.
 - Leading (10U, 12U, 14U, & 16U) – Runners may lead on the pitcher's release. The runner shall be called out if she leaves the base early.
 - Stealing (8U) – No stealing is allowed.
 - Stealing (10B) – Runners may steal third base only and cannot advance on an overthrow, even if the ball goes out of play. Runners cannot steal second base or home.
 - Stealing (10U A) – Runners may steal second base, third base or home. Runners may advance one base only (at their risk) on an over throw from the catcher on a steal attempt, **even if the balls goes into Dead Ball Territory.**
 - Pick-off (10U B) – Runners on first or third base cannot advance on a pickoff attempt from the catcher, even if the ball goes out of play or if the pitcher misses the throw back from the catcher.
 - Pick-off (10U A) – Runners on first or third base may advance one base only (at their risk) on a pickoff attempt from the catcher or if the pitcher misses the throw back from the catcher.
 - Stealing (12U, 14U, & 16U) – Stealing is allowed and is unrestricted.
 - Courtesy Runners (8U) – A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher at any time. The courtesy runner is the last batter to make an out.
 - Courtesy Runners (10U, 12U, 14U, & 16U) – A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher or catcher at any time. If the team is using Cinderella batting for all players in attendance, the last batter to make an out must be used as the runner. If a team is following normal substitution rules, a player that is not currently in the game must be used. No player may be used as a courtesy runner more than once in an inning.
 - End of Play (8U) – Base runners are limited to one base on all batted balls hit in the infield. No advances are allowed for overthrows to any base. Base runners may take additional bases on all batted balls hit into the outfield. If an outfielder fields the ball in the outfield or the infield the base runners may continue to run until the ball is thrown or transferred and secured by an infielder. Base running must end at the next base once the ball is returned to the infield and has been secured by an infielder. The outfield shall be defined as 10 feet beyond the base path or if the grass of the outfield is agreed upon during ground rules with the umpire the grass is where the outfielders must start at the beginning of each play/pitched ball.
 - End of Play (10U, 12U, 14U, & 16U) – The look back rule is in affect once the ball is secured in the pitching circle. If a runner is standing on a base once the ball is secured in the pitching circle, she must not leave the base or will be called out. If the runner is between bases, she is allowed one stop and then must immediately decide whether to return to the previous bag or continue on to the next bag. Dancing between bases once the ball is secured in the circle will result in the runner being called out. If the pitcher leaves the circle, fakes a throw, or throws the ball in an attempt to make a play on the runner, the ball is again live and the runner's actions are unrestricted.
 - Continuance (10U A, 12U, 14U, & 16U) – If a batter is awarded a base on balls or advances to first base on a dropped third strike, she may continue to second base even if the ball is secured in the circle. However, if the ball is in the circle, the runner must continue to second base without stopping. If she stops after touching first base without a play being made on her, she will be called out. A fake throw constitutes a play.
 - Sliding (10U, 12U, 14U & 16U) – Where there is the chance of a 'play at the plate', runners are required to slide to avoid collisions with the catcher. A 'play at the plate' is determined solely by the umpire. No head first sliding, except when diving back to a base.
 - Sliding (8U) – Players are encouraged, but not required to slide.
- Game Length:
 - Innings (8U,10U &12U) – Game length will be 6-innings. Mercy at 10 runs after 4 innings and 8 runs after 5 innings (3½ & 4½ if home team is leading) unless both coaches agree to continue until time limit, umpires are required to stay if it is agreed to extend the game. **No win is guaranteed if the game is extended.**

- Innings (14U, & 16U) – Game length will be 7 innings. Mercy at 10 runs after 5 innings and 8 runs after 6 innings (4½ & 5½ if home team is leading) unless both coaches agree to continue until time limit, umpires are required to stay if it is agreed to extend the game.
- Time – The goal is to keep the game length to 2 hours. No new inning should start after 1 hour and 45 minutes. A new inning officially begins as soon as the third out is recorded in the previous inning. Please choose an official time keeper (usually the umpire) prior to the game. Once an inning is started, it should be completed, even if it exceeds the two hour guideline. Regular season games can end in a tie, playoff games must go to completion. Unless sufficient notice is given (minimum 24 hours), a team must be able to field 8 eligible players by game time. There will be a 20 minute grace period. If a team does not have enough players after 20 minutes, that team forfeits. The teams may then choose to play a scrimmage.
- Weather or darkness – If a game needs to be stopped due to bad weather or darkness prior to the 1 hour 45 minute mark, it should be considered complete once it is official. For 8U and 10U, 12U games are considered official if 4 full innings have been played (3½ innings if home team is leading). For 14U & 16U, games are considered official if 5 full innings have been played (4 and ½ innings if home team is leading). If a regular season game gets stopped prior to becoming official, it must be started from the beginning at a later date. Playoff games must be completed from the point the left off.
- Thunder & Lightning – The game should be stopped immediately if any lightning or thunder is present. The umpire should stop the game for 30 minutes from the last occurrence.
- Miscellaneous:
 - Backstop – Coaches are responsible for keeping the backstop clear of spectators and players.
 - Sportsmanship – All players will shake hands after the game.

Game Results:

Both teams must email game results to SummerScoreReport@DenvilleSoftball.Org within 24 hours of the game. Please include the Full Game Code, the winning and losing team names, and the score. Game results and standings will be posted on the Denville Softball website (www.denvillesoftball.org) and kept for playoff seeding.

Game results not emailed by 8:30pm on the last day of the regular season will not be included for playoff seeding, subject to change and would be announced league wide. Click on the “Denville Summer Softball League” link on the left side of the home page to access the game results and standings for each division. Teams will be awarded 3 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, and 1 point for a loss. Teams forfeiting a game will be awarded 0 points. Teams winning by forfeit will be awarded 3 points. Playoff seeding will be based on points earned. The tie breaker will be head to head competition, winning percentage of games played, and then coin flip. Runs scored or allowed will not be considered for seeding.

Make-up Game Procedure:

The home team must contact the visiting team to find a mutually agreeable makeup date. The home team must provide the field and umpire. If the home team does not have field availability, the visiting team may host the game.

End of Season Tournament:

There will be an end of season tournament with trophies awarded for 1st and 2nd place. ***The end of season tournament will take place on dates TBD, but playoffs will not go beyond Sunday, July 26, 2020. Please clear your schedules during this time.*** Teams unable to play on the scheduled date will forfeit. Teams must play a minimum of 8 out of 10, or 9 out of 11 regular season games to be eligible for the playoffs. Playoff games cannot end in a tie. If a game needs to be stopped due to bad weather or darkness, it should be considered complete if official. If the game gets stopped prior to becoming official, it must be completed from the point it left off at a later date. If the game ends in a tie after the regulation number of innings, the international tie breaker will be used in the subsequent innings until the tie is broken. A runner starts on second base for each extra inning. The runner selected must be the last batted out from the previous inning. ***The higher seed will host preliminary playoff rounds and the cost of umpires and balls are covered by both teams. The championship games will be held in Denville and Denville will cover the umpire costs. The Championship games will not have a time limit.***

Umpires

The home team must secure the umpire for regular season games and initial rounds of the playoffs. The umpire fee is typically \$50-\$60. Due to blackout dates and field availability, teams may not have an equal number of home and away games. Therefore, the home team must pay the umpire half the fee and the visiting team must pay the umpire half the fee for each game. Please make sure the umpires hired for your home games receive a copy of the rules in advance and know what age group they will be working with. Please do not argue with the umpires over judgment calls. If you believe a rule has been interpreted incorrectly, please call time out and have a conference with the umpire and the opposing coach to review the rule. Once reviewed, the umpire has the authority to reverse the call or let it stand. As with the judgment call, the umpire's decision is final. If you believe a rule has been interpreted incorrectly, please contact Rob Zuffi at SUMMERLEAGUE@DENVILLESOFTBALL.ORG to review the situation and clarification for future games. If there was a misinterpretation, a communication will be sent out to all coaches indicating the situation and the correct interpretation.

Competition

The Denville Summer Softball League is intended to be a fun league where both developing and experienced teams can participate. Please be respectful and courteous to your opponents. If a game becomes one-sided, please use that as an opportunity to put your second or third pitcher in the game.

Behavior

Parents, players, and coaches must behave appropriately. Foul language or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Any parent, player, or coach removed from the game due to poor behavior must leave the area immediately or will result in a forfeit by their team. Repeated offenses may result in a team being removed from the league.

Cheering for team mates can be great fun for the players. It is the coach's responsibility to keep the cheers positive. Negative cheers or screaming out during the pitchers windup in an attempt to distract the pitcher are not consistent with the spirit of the league.

This league belongs to the players and the teams that participate. Keep it fun and have a great season!