

# Girls Softball 8U (Rookie Division)

## 2023 Rules of Play (Pitching Machine League)

### GENERAL RULES:

1. Girls Softball Rookies Division is a non-competitive division, meaning that standings are not kept. However, team records must be maintained to document that all girls are rotating their spot in the batting order and positions in the field.
2. Weeknight games will start at 6:00 P.M and weekend games as scheduled.
3. Only the Division Director or VP, Softball Director can declare a rain out.
4. Time limit – no inning will start 1:45 hours after the first pitch. A full inning can be completed if it began prior to the 1:45 hour mark.
5. Games will be 6 innings (subject to time limit noted above), or end due to darkness, whichever comes first. Last inning should be completed in its entirety unless called due to darkness, in which case the game will be considered complete.
6. Little league rules apply, except where noted.
7. This division is instructional. We want to play the games. Both managers to cooperate if opposing team needs players to field a team.
8. Coaches must be on the field to instruct their players and should be standing on the outfield grass behind the outfielders. No more than two defensive coaches should be on the field instructing the players at any time.
9. Only the manager or acting manager of the game may approach the umpire for any reason.
10. No one is permitted behind the backstop during the games. This includes all coaches, parents & children.
11. There is **ZERO** tolerance policy for any type of abuse towards an umpire. Managers are responsible for behavior of the parents and spectators of their team.
12. No negative chanting.
13. **Please be respectful of the umpire, they are young kids trying to give back to the organization. Please treat them, as you would wish a coach would treat your child. If you have any issues with the umpire please contact your division director immediately following the game.**
14. Only those on your team roster can ever practice/play or participate with your team. Under no circumstances can siblings or friends not registered in PLL participate.
15. All players should always be in full uniform. Top, bottom and socks.

### PITCHING MACHINE RULES:

1. Regulation 11 inch dimpled pitching machine softball will be used. **No other type of ball may be used in the pitching machine.**
2. Pitching machine distance will be about 32 feet. Coach's judgment if it needs to be adjusted. No closer than **30 feet** will be allowed.
3. Only a manager or coach is allowed to feed balls into the machine at any time. No players are permitted to feed balls into the machine.

4. The machine will be set to 30 MPH. If you feel the speed needs to be adjusted, both managers must be in agreement. Any such adjustment can only be made at the start of an inning and maintained for the duration of the inning.
5. An adult must be always standing near the pitching machine. Especially between innings to ensure that players do not touch the machine. **The pitching machine must never be left unattended.**
6. Coaches will pitch to their own team.
7. If the generator loses power and/or the machine is not functioning properly, stop using the machine and remove it from the field. Coaches should now manually pitch to their teams as to continue the game without any disruption.
8. A batted ball which hits any part of the pitching machine (including the bucket of balls or generator) will be a ground rule single with all **FORCED** runners advancing one base.
9. For 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teams, the last 2 - 3 games of the spring season will be "girls pitching" (these will be marked on the final schedules). You should practice this skill with the girls throughout the season. Only the girls with the strongest ability should be permitted the opportunity to pitch in a league game. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders should be prioritized over 2<sup>nd</sup> graders for pitching. Each girl should not pitch more than 2 innings if there are others that can throw strikes. After 4 walks in an inning the coach will pitch to their own team and be allowed up to 6 pitches per batter. The batter has 3 swings or 6 pitches to hit the ball, which can be extended by a foul on the 3<sup>rd</sup> swing or the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch. When girls are pitching, the umpire should use a consistent, liberal strike zone. Please discuss this with the umpire before the game.
10. All additional girls could be given the opportunity to pitch in practice games arranged privately by their respective coaches.

### **FIELDING:**

1. 10 players in the field, **extra players will need to be on the bench during the inning.** Under no circumstances should a team field more than 10 players (catcher included).
2. Must have 4 across in the outfield, no short centerfielder.
3. Please make sure that the outfielders are on the outfield grass when the pitch is thrown to the batter.
4. No player should play 3 consecutive innings in the outfield. They must be alternated from outfield to infield each inning.
5. No player may sit on the bench for two consecutive innings.
6. There will be a girl to the right or the left of the pitching machine playing pitcher. These "pitchers" do not pitch as they just field the position. Make sure they are 3 feet to the side or in front of the machine as to stay away from running into the machine while fielding.
7. If a team does not have enough players to dress a catcher, or chooses to not dress a catcher, the parent who is catching should not make a fielding play. A play at the plate can be made in order to teach the girls where to throw in certain circumstances, however it should not be considered an out.
8. It is strongly suggested that each manager make an organized list/chart prepared before the game of fielding positions for each inning and batting order.

9. It is strongly encouraged that any athlete playing 1B, 3B or the Pitcher wear a fielding mask.

### **BATTING:**

1. Universal batting will be in effect throughout the entire season (meaning, all athletes present will bat in the lineup regardless of their position in the field).
2. Each batter will get up to 5 deliveries from the machine to put the ball in play. The umpire can declare a “no pitch” for any delivered ball that is deemed out of the strike zone and unreasonable for the batter to swing. An at bat will continue if the fifth delivered pitch is a foul ball. **The batter will be considered out after 5 deliveries if the ball is not put in play, or fouled off.**
3. Keep records and alternate the batting order from game to game. The same girls should not be batting in the lower half of the order on a consistent basis.
4. When the girls are pitching, any batter that is hit by a pitch will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base, as long as they make an effort to move out of the way of the pitch. This includes a ball that hits the ground first and then hits the batter. This is at the **umpire’s** discretion that the girl has tried to avoid the pitched ball.
5. Innings are 3 outs or 4 runs scored, including the last inning. Whichever comes first.
6. Players must play a minimum of 4 innings in the field and 2 innings at an infield position. No one can sit 2 innings in a row.
7. All players must wear a batting helmet with an approved face guard. No exceptions to this rule.

### **BASE RUNNING:**

1. Bases will be set at 50 feet.
2. No leading and no stealing of any base.
3. Runners may not take extra bases on any over throw.
4. No advancing to an extra base on any errors.
5. Two out catcher rule in effect. Courtesy runner must be used to replace the catcher for the following inning when they are on base and there are two outs, in order to speed up play. Courtesy runner is last batted out.
6. **If a batter cleanly hits a ball through the infield/into the outfield area and the umpire would not score it an error, they are permitted to run for a double. A batter may not try to extend a single into a double on balls hit in front of the infielders or on overthrows resulting from infield ground balls.**
7. No infield fly rule.

### **MANAGERS’/COACHES’ RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Pitching machines will be in their respective sheds. Please treat the machine tenderly as we would like it to last for years of enjoyment. Do not drag the machine onto the field. Please use the carrier to wheel it to and from the field.
2. You must have the machine set up at the field ready to go 15 minutes prior to game time.

3. Immediately after the game the machine should be returned to the shed.
4. The machines can only be used for a scheduled softball game or practice on your league schedule.
5. Anyone wishing to borrow the machine for a team practice outside of one previously scheduled must arrange this with the Division Director or the VP, Director of Softball with at least 2 days' notice. A team practice must have more than half your team present. No exceptions.
6. The machine may never be borrowed for any other purpose and must be returned to the shed immediately after your game or practice. It must be available for the next practice or game. If the gas canister has been used up during your practice or game, the manager(s) are responsible for filling it (cost to be reimbursed by the league) and returning the full gas canister to the shed.

### **MANAGER/COACHES PREPARATION**

1. Managers are responsible to come to their games with a prepared fielding plan and batting order. Instruct your teams to let you know in advance if they can't make a game or practice. This is a courtesy that parents should show their teams.
2. Managers and coaches must come to practices with a prepared practice plan. Write it out with a time table to follow so that you cover all you planned.
3. For practices, try breaking the girls into smaller groups, circuit training, and elicit parents to help assist with each group. As an example, a team with 12 girls would not want to place all 12 in the field and hit to them one by one. This would be quite a boring drill and not recommended unless you were teaching cut offs or calling for the ball. Instead, to provide more touches and swings set up a hitting group, fielding group and base running group. Each group should have a third of your total and then rotate groups after roughly 15 minutes or everyone gets up. Keep them moving in their group and in the practice plan. Variety fights boredom. No one should be waiting in a line for their turn. Give it a shot.
4. Managers and coaches must be at the field at least 15 minutes before starting times. Advise your team that you expect them to arrive 15 minutes prior to all start times. We must start the games on time. Have respect for your fellow coaches.
5. Managers are responsible to make sure there are ice packs and a first aid kit at the field for every game or practice, and that the AED is on the field and all managers/coaches and parents know where it is.