

# BROOKLYN PARK ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE

### RULES AND POLICIES FOR 2013

Changes from 2012 are highlighted.

The purpose of the BPAA is to benefit the physical, mental, moral, and character development of its members and of the youth in our community by providing major sport programs and activities for boys and girls, regardless of ability or financial status. (Article 1, BPAA By-Laws)

Remember to coach safety, fundamentals, and sportsmanship.

In all divisions, games will be played in accordance with the official 2013 USSSA Rules for Slow Pitch Softball, **except as stated in this document.**

- **See the 8U Rules Supplement for additional rules for that division regarding Coach Pitching, Coaches in the Field, Umpires, Player Rotation, etc.**

**Team Rosters:** Commissioners will give the Softball Committee a team roster for each team in each Division, before the season starts. At player's option, player may register at sign-ups to play up to a higher division. Players opting to play up to a higher division must declare this intent prior to team rosters being formed. **No player shall participate before being registered and waivers are signed.**

<u>Division</u>	<u>Base Distance*</u>	<u>Pitching Distance</u>	<u>Infield Fly Rule</u>	<u>Ball Size</u>
8U	55'	35'	No	11"
10U	60'	40'	No	11"
12U	65'	46'	No	11"
14U	65'	50'	Yes	11"
16U	65'	50'	Yes	11"
19U	65'	50'	Yes	11"

\* **Bases should be placed on dirt portion of field. Please adjust bases in to skin on any field not allowing bases to be on infield skin.**

**Weather Conditions:** No games or practices will be held when the National Weather Service has issued Severe Weather Warnings or when lightning is within 10 miles. If any game is interrupted by severe weather, the game will be suspended by the umpire (if one is present) or by agreement of the head coaches if there is no umpire. Unless conditions warrant otherwise, all parties should wait at the field for up to 15 minutes to determine if the game can be resumed. After 15 minutes, if game cannot be resumed (as determined by umpire or head coaches), players and coaches may leave. Umpire may leave if there are no other games scheduled or field conditions become unplayable for further games.

**Make-up Games:** Games not played due to rain outs, wet grounds, etc., will be re-scheduled and played prior to completion of the regular season schedule if possible. **Games may only be re-scheduled by the League Scheduler. Work with your Division Commissioner to coordinate rescheduling.**

**Score Books** are provided and must be used by **both teams**.

Scheduled **Home Team will always** be assigned the 3rd base dugout, except in the case of a doubleheader. A team playing a second straight game on the same field will remain in the same dugout for the second game, regardless of whether they are home or away, and their opponent will use the vacant dugout. **In tournaments, home team (in terms of batting order) is determined by a pre-game coin toss, but the higher-seeded team will use the 3rd base dugout, unless one team is playing a second straight game on the same field. The team bench is to be used only by Players and Coaches.** If all coaches for a team will be in on-field coaching positions, the coaches may designate one or more parents to be present in the bench area to assist them. No one else is allowed in the team bench area.

**Substitute Player:** There is no substitution from the team's original roster in the 19U Division.

In all other Divisions, a **BPAA Slow Pitch Softball** registered player, **with their Coach's approval**, may **temporarily** fill in for a team in an **older Division** to bring that team's roster up to ten players. A player playing up to an older Division **may not pitch**.

**A substitute player may not play if** a team has ten rostered players available for the game. A substitute player may however, enter the game in place of an injured rostered player. **Violation of this rule will constitute forfeit of the game.**

**Coach(es):** All Coaches must be at least 18 years of age. The Coach's box is three feet back from the baseline. **A Coach may not touch a baserunner at anytime during play**, if this infraction occurs the base runner is out. **Exception** is made if the baserunner runs down or falls over the Coach standing three feet back from the baseline, **or if the coach is congratulating a batter/runner after an out-of-the-park homerun.**

**Umpires: Umpire decisions are final.** The home plate Umpire is the Head Umpire. A game may be played with one Umpire if necessary. If there are any questions regarding rules, contact your Division Commissioner. Minimum age limit for Umpires is 18 Years in 14U, 16U, and 19U divisions. Minimum age limit for Umpires is 16 Years in 12U division.

**In the 10U Division**, games will normally be officiated by an Umpire supplied by the League. However, if one is not available, each team will furnish one Umpire and they will rotate position between home plate and the infield each half inning. The Umpire

from the defensive team will umpire behind home plate during each at bat. **Head Coaches or Base Coaches may not Umpire.**

In the **12U, 14U, 16U, and 19U Divisions**, games will be officiated by one Umpire, supplied by the League.

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules regarding Umpires.

**Umpires are in charge of the game.** At least five minutes before the scheduled start of the game, the Umpire(s) shall call the Coaches from the opposing teams together for a conference. Make it clear that you are calling the game. Inquire of the Coaches if there are any special ground rules for that field and be certain both Umpires and all Coaches understand them. **Don't hesitate to inquire, if only for your own benefit, about any questions regarding the rules.** Please bring a whiskbroom, piece of cloth or something to dust off the home plate.

**Bats:** All bats must be Official Softball. **The performance standard for all bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less.**

**Thrown Bat:** The Head Umpire will issue a warning to both team benches on the first occasion of a thrown bat. Any batter throwing their bat after the warning has been issued is out, the ball is dead, and the base runners may not advance. **This rule shall be enforced at all levels.**

**Bunting:** It is illegal to bunt or chop at the ball. The batter is out.

A runner shall be awarded **the next base the runner is going to** if blocked by a fielder who is not in possession of the ball.

**Three Ball – Two Strike Count:** In all divisions **except in the 8U and 10U Divisions**, three balls shall constitute a Walk and two strikes shall constitute a Strike Out, except that each batter with one Strike shall be allowed one courtesy foul ball; after which, the batter is OUT if a second foul ball is hit or another Strike is called.

**In the 10U Division four balls constitute a walk**, and two strikes shall constitute a Strike Out, except that each batter with one Strike shall be allowed one courtesy foul ball; after which, the batter is OUT if a second foul ball is hit or another Strike is called.

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules regarding batting limits.

**Hit Batter:** Batter hit by the pitched ball is not awarded first base.

**Base Running:** In all Divisions, **when a play is made on a base runner at a base**, the base runner must either slide or clearly get out of the way. If base runner fails to do so, they will be called out. Double first bases are used (place the white base in-bounds with the colored base in foul territory). The first baseman will use the base in the playing field, and the runner will use the base in the foul area when there is a play at 1<sup>st</sup> base.

If base runner interferes with an attempted double play, the base runner immediately succeeding will also be called out.

**Infield Fly Rule:** In the 12U, 14U, 16U, and 19U divisions, the standard USSSA Infield Fly Rule will be in effect. **The Infield Fly Rule will not be used in the 8U and 10U divisions.**

**Courtesy Runners:** Courtesy runners may not be used, except for a player who is injured during their current time at bat.

**Positioning of Fielders:** In the 10U Division, the First, Second, Shortstop and Third base players can not be more than five feet in front of the base line when the ball is pitched. . If runners are on base, the baseman and shortstop should not stand in the baseline unless said player is fielding or is in possession of the ball. All four outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass at the start of each play. (Exceptions to this rule may be agreed upon by the coaches and umpires before the game when playing on fields with non-standard infield skins.)

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules regarding Fielder Positions.

**Starting Time:** All games will start promptly as specified on the League Schedule, or will be forfeited by the team not on the field ready to play. A team with an insufficient number of players to start a game will be allowed a ten-minute grace period **from the scheduled start time** to field a team.

A team should have ten players, but may start a game with nine players. To avoid forfeit, a team must also finish a game with a minimum of nine players. **8U Instructional Division may play with seven players without penalty of forfeit.**

**Length of Games:** A regulation game is seven innings. A total of four innings, or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead, shall constitute a game. **Extra innings may only be played within the time constraints listed below. Tie games during the regular season shall be recorded as a tie.**

**In the 10U and 12U Divisions,** there is a 90 minute time limit. **No new inning can start after the time limit.** All innings started must be completed.

**In the 14U, 16U and 19U Divisions,** there is a 1 hour time limit per game. **No new inning can start after the time limit.** All innings started must be completed.

**League tournaments may have different time limits—See the rules of each tournament for details.**

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules regarding game length.

**Established Limits of Ball in Play:** Umpires and opposing Coaches shall discuss boundary lines for the particular field before the game starts. The playing field is within two imaginary lines starting at the backstop's wings, then running parallel with the first and third base foul lines. If the backstop does not have wings, the line is three feet in

front of the players' bench. The ball is live and in play within these boundaries. Only Players, Coaches, and Umpires are allowed within the field of play.

**Uniform/Equipment:** In **ALL** Divisions, Uniform Shirts, Pants and Socks/Stirrups, where provided, must be worn during games. Teams may provide their own uniforms, as long as each team member has one, and that they are in good taste. Shirts must be appropriately worn throughout the game (shirts must not be rolled up exposing midriff). Failure to appropriately wear uniform could result in ejection from the game.

The catcher must wear the Face Mask, Skull Cap, and Chest Protector provided by the League **during games and practices.**

The use of mouth guards are highly recommended at all age levels.

All players in all divisions up to and including 16U must provide their own helmet, which must be worn by all batters, base runners, and non-adult base coaches. Neither chin straps nor face masks are required. In the 19U Division, helmets are recommended, but not required. **19U players not using helmets do so at their own risk.**

**Game Ball:** The home team will provide the umpire a new game ball prior to the start of each game. A playable ball will be furnished by the visiting team.

**Pitcher Warm-up:** Warm-up is limited to 5 pitches for a new pitcher, and 3 pitches between innings.

**Pitching Arc:** The ball must be delivered at moderate speed, underhand (from below the hip) with a perceptible arc at least as high as the batter's head, but **not to exceed 10 feet**, before the ball reaches home plate. A flat pitch, a pitch without sufficient arc, is a Ball, even if it is within the strike zone. Should a batter swing at a flat pitch and miss or foul, it is a strike. If the batter swings and hits the ball, the ball is alive and in play. A pitch hitting home plate is a Ball, unless swung at.

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules regarding pitching arc.

The **pitcher's foot** must be in contact with the pitcher's plate or mark when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand **except in the 8U Instructional Division.**

**Six Runs per Inning Rule:** In the **8U, 10U, and 12U Divisions** there is a maximum six run limit per team, per inning. When a team's sixth runner crosses home plate, their turn at bat ends, **regardless of the number of outs.**

**Fifteen Run Game Rule:** In the **14U, 16U, and 19U Divisions** there is a fifteen run rule after five full innings have been played. A team ahead by fifteen runs or more after five full innings, **regardless of the time remaining**, is the winner.

**Time Called:** In all divisions except 8U, TIME shall be called by the Umpire when the fielding team has control of the ball within the baselines and runners have ceased to try to advance. The ball shall be considered dead, and base runners may not advance after TIME is called.

- See the **8U Rules Supplement** for that division's rules on time being called.

**All Divisions will Bat Their Entire Team Roster:** In ALL Divisions, teams shall bat their entire team roster in a continuous batting order. The batting order may not be changed during the game. A copy of the batting order with the names and numbers of each player shall be given to the opposing Coach before the start of the game. Late players shall be added at the end of the batting order.

**Minimum Playing Time: In the 14U and 16U Divisions,** each player on every team shall play a minimum of three full innings on the field. No player shall sit out two consecutive innings.

**In the 8U, 10U, and 12U Divisions** all players shall play an equal amount of time in the field. **Example:** No player shall sit out their 2<sup>nd</sup> inning until all players on their team have sat one inning and so on to the end of the game.

**In all divisions** any player(s) that will not be allowed to participate (benched) for disciplinary reasons shall be called to the attention of the opposing Coach when the batting orders are exchanged. **A Coach may not bench a player for quality of play.** However, repeated acts of unsportsmanlike conduct, profanity or detrimental conduct are grounds for some disciplinary action. Keep in mind BPAA's "play for fun" philosophy.

**Game Protests:** Protests must be submitted **in writing and signed** within 24 hours after the game. Submit protest to your Division Commissioner with \$25.00. If protest is upheld, the \$25.00 deposit will be refunded; if declined, the deposit will be donated to the BPAA.

**No protest may be filed on Umpire (League or Parent) judgement calls.**

**Coaches, Players and Fan Conduct:** The Head Coach shall control themselves, their team and fans, or Umpires may forfeit the game.

**Coaches, players or fans are not to direct any verbal abuse, profanity or other form of ridicule at an Umpire, Coach, or Player.** A Coach or player doing so will be warned, and if it is repeated, the Umpire may elect to declare the game a forfeit in favor of the non-offending team, or eject the offending Coach/player from the game.

If an Umpire is harassed unduly by the fans of one or both teams, he/she may call "TIME" and ask the Coach(es) to speak to their fans about confining their vocal efforts to cheering for their own team. **IF harassment continues,** the Umpire may declare the

game a forfeit in favor of the non-offending team or “no contest” if both teams are at fault, in which case each team will receive a loss on their record.

A Coach showing unsportsmanlike conduct may be given one warning from a Softball Committee Member. If a problem arises again, the Softball Committee, as a whole, has the right to expel that Coach for the remainder of the **current season and if deemed appropriate for an unlimited period of time**. Unsportsmanlike conduct is defined as harassment of their own players, opposing team players, other Coaches, or Umpires.

**Recruitment of Players by Coaches is not allowed** in the 8U, 10U, and 12U divisions and could result in disciplinary action of by the Softball Committee. Recruitment shall be defined as contacting current BPAA Slow Pitch Softball players or their parents with the intent to influence the player’s decision to request to play for that coach’s team in order to improve that team’s performance. Contact is defined but not limited to face to face contact, telephone conversation or written communication. The BPAA Softball Committee will review any allegations of recruitment brought before the committee. If the BPAA Softball Committee rules that a coach has violated this policy, disciplinary action will result as follows: First Offense - up to a one year suspension from coaching in BPAA Softball; Additional Offense – up to a lifetime suspension from coaching in BPAA Softball.

**NO SMOKING – NO LIQUOR:** There is no smoking or liquor allowed on any SCHOOL PROPERTY, or in front of or on the team benches. Coaches and Umpires will enforce this rule. No liquor is allowed on City Park Grounds. This is a BROOKLYN PARK CITY ORDINANCE. If any problems arise, call the Brooklyn Park Police using **911**.

Only coaches, assistant coaches, players, and coach-designated parent assistants are allowed in the dugout/bench area. No other spectators (siblings, friends, pets, etc.) will be allowed in the area. Coaches should be aware of who should/should not be on the bench and ask all non-players and non-coaches to return to the designated spectator areas before play is resumed.

Warm-up swings by on-deck batters are to be done only in designated areas, away from the main bench areas. Only one player is allowed to be taking warm-up swings at a time.