

8u HOUSE INTER-LEAGUE RULES

The 8u Coach Pitch/T-Ball program strives to introduce new players to the game of softball and to continue to develop skills for the returning players while preparing all players to move to the next level of play. The emphasis for this league is teaching the rules and skills, positioning of players in both defensive and base running situations, and strategies of softball while encouraging teamwork, good sportsmanship, and enjoyment of the game. The rules for 8u will follow the same guidelines as USA Softball, except those modified in this document:

1. General Rules:

- a. Each game will consist of no more than six (6) innings.
- b. All games will end (drop dead time) in 1 hour and 25 minutes; no new inning will start after 1 hour and 15 minutes into the game.
- c. All players present at the game will bat each inning.
- d. Players should be rotated to different defensive positions each inning.
- e. There are no umpires assigned to these games. Coaches/Assistant Coaches will umpire the games. Base coaches will tell their own players if they are out.
- f. 11" Hard Balls will be used for the games. (Note – if a defensive team prefers to use "softie" balls they may supply them for use only when that team is on defense).
- g. Teams will play a game regardless of the number of players present.

2. Batting:

- a. Coaches will decide if the batter should start from a tee or receive pitches from the Coach. As much as possible, players should start with a pitched ball.
- b. Coach Pitching: Each batter will receive a maximum of five (5) pitches. The emphasis is 5 pitches, not 5 swings. 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 5 pitches. If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will then move to the tee.
- c. There is no bunting allowed at this level. Any bunt will be considered as a foul ball.
- d. Any ball that stays inside the base lines is fair and playable except if it is not hit beyond a semi-circle 5 feet from home plate. Any ball within that distance is a foul ball.
- e. Coaches must ensure that the batter takes her swings safely. Batter should be taught to hit and drop the bat rather than throw the bat after hitting the ball.
- f. Coaches may change the order of their lineups for each inning to allow the players to bat from a variety of spots in the lineup.
- g. The 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.

3. Base Running:

- All base runners must wear a (USA Softball compliant) 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.
- 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 throw or the base was touched.
 - **Exception:** When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners may 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.

4. 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, and C); all other players must play in the outfield.
 - Players should be rotated to different defensive positions each inning.
- Players should be encouraged to always try to throw and catch the ball with the other players (rolling the ball in should be discouraged).
- Catchers must wear full catcher’s gear including face guard with helmet, chest protector and shin guards.

- e. Infielders must start each play in their position and move to the ball after it is hit.
- f. When the last batter hits the ball, the defense must attempt to put out a base runner before throwing the ball to the catcher.
 - **Exception:** This rule does not apply if there is a base runner on 3rd base.

5. Fields:

- a. Field Cancellations:
 - Please check 703-324-5264 for Fairfax County field cancellations.
 - Coaches may both agree to cancel a game if weather conditions, within two (2) hours of game time, warrant.
 - Schools have priority for use of school fields. Home team will notify teams of any conflicts at school fields.
- b. Do not use fields for games or practices when conditions are likely to cause injury or use will result in damage to the field.
- c. All practices and games must stop if anyone sees lightening or hears thunder.
- d. Everyone must take cover in cars and play may not resume until 30 minutes have gone by without seeing lightening or hearing thunder.
- e. Home team is responsible for preparing the field before the game. This includes raking any bad spots, lining the field with chalk (lime) and getting the batters T available. The measurements and/or base/chalk lines to be made by the home team before each game are as follows:
 - 35' between home plate and the pitching rubber
 - Baseline from home to 1st base and home to 3rd base
 - Right and left batting boxes are 3' wide and 7' deep – 4' from middle of plate forward and 3' from middle of plate backward
 - 8' circle (radius) chalk line around the pitching rubber