**Optimist Club of Kitchener Southwest**

3-Pitch is meant to get young people interested in the game of softball by encouraging and maintaining the active participation of all players.

**Rotation of players through the defensive positions is mandatory at each game.**

**Mercy rule**: **there is a 5 run per inning maximum except in the 7th or last inning.**

**Sportsmanship**

Please abide by the city ordinances and league rules.

We have a "zero tolerance for abuse”.

**Equipment**

**uniform:** consists of a team shirt and hat, both of which must be properly worn by all players during all games and the photo session.

Each team's equipment bag(s) also includes a selection of bats, new & used balls, a basic first-aid kit, a score-book, a hammer, a tape measure and a set of bases (including a safety base for use at first).

**Supplied by Player**

* baseball glove - any regulation softball (or fastball) glove is suitable.
* pants - long pants. (mid calf minimum).
* shoes - running shoes or shoes with molded rubber cleats may be used (no metal cleats).
* personal batting helmet with strap.

**Balls & bats:** The balls are provided by the Optimist Club. Players may use their own bat but must be prepared to share it with the other players.

**Helmets: Pitcher & catcher:**  facemasks are provided and must be worn by both the fielding pitcher & the catcher.

**The offensive pitcher:**often one of the coaching staff, may wear face protection and additional "body" protection is highly recommended.

**Throwing Equipment:**

      (a)   Throwing equipment in anger or disgust is poor sportsmanship and results in the player being ejected.

**Definitions**

     **Base path** - direct line from the runner to the next base.

**Batter's box** - the area on either side of home plate within which the batter shall have both feet in when contacting the ball.

**Dead-hit ball** - A legally batted ball, **No bunts.**

     **Fair-hit ball** – stays within the first and third baseline before the bases or lands fair after the bases.

     **Leadoff** – no leadoffs or the runner is out.

     **Legal team** - a minimum of 8 able players.

    **Commitment line** - a line perpendicular to third base line drawn at the halfway point between home and third.

   **No hit** - When batter hits the ball before the plate umpire has authorized the pitcher to pitch.

   **Out of play** - imaginary lines (usually extension of the backstops) which run parallel to the first and third base lines.

   **Scoring Line** - a line that is parallel to the 1st base line but starts at the point of the plate closest to third base and continues to the backstop.  Runner must contact the ground, on or beyond the scoring line to be safe.

   **Strike** - a missed swing on a **hittable** pitch, a hittable pitch, a foul ball, a dead hit ball or an illegally batted ball

 **Time Called -**when any defensive player has control of the ball in the infield area and, in the judgment of the plate umpire, there is no play to be made and/or no attempt to make a play on any of the base runners. **"Time" will not be called if the offensive team is running the bases.**

**Playing Rules**

 **Line-ups**:

 (a) At least five minutes before the start of the game, the managers/coaches must show the batting line-up for the 7 innings to be played to the opposing team's managers/coaches for review. Each team's scorekeeper must have both teams' lists and line-ups before the start of the game

 (b) The batting order cannot be changed once circulated and is used throughout the game. If there is an excused absence, then that batter is skipped and misses batting during that entire run through the order.

(c) Late-arrival players put on the bottom of the lineup

(d) Line-up changes must be reported to the plate umpire and the opposing team's scorekeeper.

**Regulation game:**

The home team should set up the field equipment.

(a) A complete game consists of 7 innings.

(b)  No full inning will start after 7:30pm. But a inning in progress must be completed. In the event the umpire terminates the game before the end of 7 completed innings, e.g. curfew, rain, snow, and there have been at least 5 innings completed, the game will be ruled a complete game, and the final score will be as of the last completed inning.

**Defensive team:**

* An immediate direct substitution for an injured defensive player is allowed.
* Players are not permitted to change defensive positions during an inning.
* The catcher will occupy the position normally taken by the catcher behind home plate, far enough back not to interfere with the batter. The only player allowed to make plays at home plate is the catcher. (There can be no encroachment of the area by other players or runners at home plate will be declared "safe".) The **catcher** must have control of the ball and touch the home plate before the base runner crosses the scoring line to make the runner out on a play at home plate.
* The pitcher will play with both feet inside the defensive pitching box until the ball is hit
* Outfielders must be positioned at least **4** meters, (12 feet), behind the baselines. Note: for most diamonds we use, "on the grass" is acceptable for the outfielders).

**Offensive team**:

* The coaches may coach at first and third Coaches must not physically assist any player while the ball is in play or else that player will be called "out" by the umpire
* A capable person throws underhand to his/her own team at bat. The offensive pitcher must have at least one foot in the pitcher’s circle. The offensive pitcher must not take part in nor interfere with defensive plays **and is not permitted to coach runners**. (If the ball contacts the offensive pitcher, the umpire may let the play continue and stand if there was perceived to be accidental or unavoidable action/inaction with no effect on the play, rule "dead ball" or "replay" if the play was affected or rule the batter "out" if contact was intentional.)

 **Time:**

 (a) is called immediately upon injury to any player and the plate umpire will award bases as he/she sees fit.

(b)  may be called by the plate umpire before the batter makes an attempt to swing.

**Sitouts**:

No player will sit out a second time before everyone has sat out at least once and no player will sit out two consecutive innings

**The batter**

* **The batter** must stand completely inside the batter's box while attempting to swing.  (The umpire is allowed to provide guidance to ensure compliance.)
* **Strike**: A strike is called when the ball is swung at and completely missed or hit foul. Note: "Replay" decisions (e.g. pitcher interference, umpire's time/discretion), are not considered strikes.
* **a bouncing pitch will be called a "no pitch" and cannot be hit into play; it is DEAD**.

**An OUT occurs on a batter when:**

 (a) The batter has 3 hittable pitches.

       (b) A hit ball is caught in the air, regardless of height~~.~~

(c) The bat, in the umpire's judgment, is thrown out of control or dangerously. Is an out and runners don’t advance. Second infraction the player will sit out the remainder of the game.

      (f)  Batting without a properly worn batter's helmet, i.e. chinstrap securely fastened, will result in a warning. Repeated infractions will result in the batter/runner being called out.

**Batting out of order:**

         (a) when discovering the incorrect batter is still at bat, the correct batter may take his/her place, assuming all strikes accumulated to that point,

         (b) If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has batted but **before** the next batter has completed his/her turn at bat, then the player that batted out of order is out, all runners return to their bases occupied before the batting order infraction.

        (c) If the error is discovered after the next batter has completed their turn at bat (but before the end of the inning), then the player that batted out of order is out but other runners will hold their advanced positions and any runs scored will stand.

**Base Runner**

**Rules** **regarding plays at the double base (safety base) in use at first base.**

* The white half of the double base should be securely fastened in fair territory aligned with the first base line with the orange half in foul territory.  (Use two base spikes.)
* A batted ball hitting any part of the white bag is fair; a batted ball completely hitting the orange half is foul.
* If there's a fielding play being made at first on a batted ball, the runner will be declared out if he/she touches the white side of the base.

 **The base runner is out when:**

(a) tagged by a fielder with the ball when off a base. **Note: regarding play at home.**Once the runner crosses the `no return' line half-way between 3rd and home, he/she must proceed home and cannot be "tagged out" at the plate. In the case of a caught fly ball the runner is allowed to go back to third to tag up. The out must be made by the catcher touching home-plate while in possession of the ball before the runner has crossed the scoring line. However, such a runner may be tagged by any defensive player between 3rd and the "no-return".

(b)  He/she is forced out.

(c)  He/she does not tag up on a fly ball and a defensive player touches the base the runner left early

(d)  He/she interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play on the ball.

(e) He/she is hit by a fair-batted ball when off his/her base. If a batted ball hits a base runner while**on his/her base**, the ball will be ruled "dead", "time" is automatically in effect, no runners can advance and the batter resumes batting.

(f)  He/she leaves the established base-path by more than 1 meter (3 feet) to avoid a tag.

(g) They overrun another base runner.

(h)He/she misses touching a base and is seen by an umpire.

(i)  He/she interferes with the catcher by touching home-plate instead of crossing the scoring line.

(j) He/she loiters in the vicinity of home plate after scoring

 **Interference on the runner**: The defensive player must not stand on the base line.

**Overthrows**: When a ball is overthrown and leaves the playing field by ten feet, all runners are awarded the base they are approaching plus one extra base.

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