

## **Minor League Player Pitch Softball (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

### **League Philosophy:**

Our Player Pitch Level is divided into two Divisions (Majors and Minors). The Minors Division is for younger players that still need to develop their abilities while not being overmatched by older more experienced players. No 12-year-old may play in Minors. All coaches and parents should remember that the primary objectives are to teach the children how to play the game, to develop their softball skills, to instill a sense of teamwork, and to create an environment that allows them to enjoy the game.

Sportsmanship and respect for others is essential. Any coach, parent, fan or player behaving in a hostile or threatening manner towards another coach, player, parent, fan or umpire shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, which may respond with the appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the league.

All little league playing rules apply, except where modified here.

**Game Length:** 6 innings or 1 hour 45 minutes (you may finish the inning at the time limit, but please be courteous to the next game so that we do not run late). No new inning shall start after 1 hour and 30 minutes. A new inning officially starts once the 3<sup>rd</sup> out (or final run) is recorded at the bottom of the previous inning. In the event of a tie after regulations, extra innings may be played but are still subject to the original maximum time limit above. Play-off games are played to full completion and until a winner is determined.

**Keeping Score:** Bench coaches should confirm runs scored at the end of each inning. The final score should be reported by the winning team via email to the league commissioner/score keeper and will be posted online. If there is a discrepancy on a score that has been posted, please raise that to opposing coach and commissioner via email.

**Ball Size:** Each team has been supplied a bucket of correctly sized softballs for practice. This level uses the 11 inch Little League approved yellow softballs.

**Field Size:** Base path shall be set at 60ft. This is the further pegs at Norfolk.  
Pitching Rubber distance shall be 35ft. This is the closer Pitching Rubber at Norfolk and requires a temporary pitching plate at Eccles.

**Minimum Players:** For league play, teams must field 8 players for the game to count. Teams should “call up” players from the level below in an attempt to field a team at the scheduled time. Playing with less than 8 players constitutes a forfeit but coaches are encouraged to play the game regardless. During playoff games only, an “out” shall be taken for teams fielding less than 9 players in the batting order.

**Batting Lineup:** All players shall be included in the batting line up, and teams shall use a continuous batting order. Coaches are encouraged to rotate the line up throughout the season so that players have the experience of batting in different spots in the order. There is no limit to the number of batters per inning. Maximum of 5 runs per half inning (4 runs maximum for the leading team if leading by more than 10 runs).

**Defensive Positions:** 9 Players in normal positions on defense, including a Catcher. Each player must play a minimum of ½ the game on defense (more is encouraged). Players are only allowed to play the same position for 2 innings in a row including the pitcher. No player shall sit for 2 innings in a row. No player shall play more than 3 innings in the outfield.

Players must fill all other normal fielding positions and are not allowed to shift or overload their defense based on the hitter.

Infielders must start no closer to the batter than the base path.

Outfielders must start in the outfield which is defined as both feet in the grass.

Coaches are NOT allowed on the field while their team is on defense. 1 Coach is allowed to be 1-2 steps from the dugout but coaching between plays should be limited so as not to cause a delay.

### **Playing the game:**

**Pitching Rules:** Players shall pitch in all 6 innings. Coaches shall never start any at bats as Pitchers. No Player may pitch more than 2 inning per game in the Regular Season. In the Play-offs, a player may pitch up to 3 innings per game. If a Player pitches 2 innings in one game, they may not pitch the next day in the regular season. Keep in mind, 1 pitch in an inning counts as an inning. Once a player is replaced from pitching, they cannot return as a pitcher in the same game. Coaches must emphasize the “Spirit of the Game” when deciding positions.

**Coach Pitch Rule:** A Player pitches until the batter either (1) puts the ball in play, (2) strikes out (either by swinging or called), (3) four balls are called or (4) a batter is Hit By Pitch. If a Pitcher hits a batter with a pitch, the batter is awarded the choice of first base, or 5 pitches from a Coach Pitcher. Other than HBP, no walks are issued.

If the count reaches four balls, a coach steps in and delivers 5 pitches. When the Coach steps in, the count resets to 0 strikes. Coaches will pitch from within the conceptual circle of the mound or 2-3 steps in front of the pitching rubber. The Coach delivers a maximum of 5 pitches or a total of 3 swings by the batter, whichever occurs first (or more if the batter fouls off the last pitch. An at bat cannot end on a foul ball unless caught). Once the maximum coach pitches has been reached, the batter is out if they have not put the ball in play. Coaches are encouraged to throw flat pitches in order mimic a kid pitched ball, thereby improving the batters skill at hitting a well-pitched softball.

When a Coach is pitching, the defensive pitcher must remain in the vicinity of the mound. She cannot be a infield rover.

**No Bunts:** Players may NOT square to bunt. Encourage your players to swing the bat. If a “swinging bunt” occurs, it is played as normal, if in fair territory.

**Lead-Offs are NOT allowed:** Baserunners may not leave base until the ball crosses the plate.

**Stealing is allowed ONLY from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Stealing from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2nd base is not allowed, even on a wild pitch/passed ball. Stealing of home plate is NOT allowed. In the regular season, if a player leaves early, they must return to their original base. In the playoffs, if a runner leaves early, the umpire shall issue a warning to the team. Subsequent infractions by any player on that team in that game result in an out.

**No Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike** – Batter is out

### **Base running Rules:**

On a ball hit to the outfield (either a fly ball or a hard ground ball) (outfield is defined as touching the grass beyond the infield dirt), batters/baserunners may advance as far as possible at their own risk, until the ball is controlled by the defense in the infield. “Control” is defined by the ball being stopped by or in possession of a defensive player anywhere within the infield. Any base runner that has not advanced more than halfway to the next base must go back to the previous base. Though a player could sneak in from 3<sup>rd</sup> base, we are trying to eliminate the “track meet” mentality. It is important that your 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach be aware of this “control” rule so as not to over aggressively send runners home. It is recommended that your head Coach is the 3<sup>rd</sup> base Coach.

### **Overthrows:**

**Out of Play** – Runners are award one additional base from where they are at the time the ball went out of bounds. (Out of play is defined as over or beyond the fence line. This will occur frequently at Hosek)

**In Play** – Runners may attempt to advance an additional base on an overthrow that remains in play, at their own risk. The defense is required to retrieve the ball and make the runner stop.

**No Wall at 3<sup>rd</sup> base** – Runners may advance to home as an extra base on an overthrow anywhere in the infield.

**At your own Risk** - Any runner that leaves a base (even momentarily) as a move to advance is subject to being tagged out.

Overthrows of a ball that was hit to the outfield from an outfielder to an infielder are not considered “overthrows”, and runners may still advance at their own risk until the ball is “controlled” as described above.

**Runner for your Catcher:** With 2 outs (and only once there are 2 outs), if the planned catcher for the next inning is on base, the coach MUST use a courtesy runner, who shall be the player who made the last out. This is a “speed up rule” so that the catcher is prepared with gear on for the next half inning.

**Warm-up Pitches between innings:** Pitchers are limited to no more than 8 warm up pitches between innings – less is encouraged. This is intended to keep the game moving, as the goal is to play 6 innings in the allotted time. Coaches are responsible for ensuring a new pitcher is adequately warmed up while their team is batting.

**Umpires:** There is never a good reason to argue with an Umpire. There will be two Umpires assigned to each game for both regular season and Play-Offs. All Umpire’s calls are final. Remember, we use local teenagers to umpire our league. They will not be perfect, nor should they be expected to be.

**Strike Zone:** The Strike zone is the shoulders to the knees in height, and 1 ball on either side of the plate in width.

### **Player Safety**

#### **“Must Avoid Contact” Rule:**

Any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to avoid a fielder who has possession of the ball and is attempting to make a tag. This rule is often misinterpreted as a “must slide rule”. The purpose of the rule is to prevent collisions and injuries. The runner does not have to slide, they have 3 choices: (1) slide, (2) go around the fielder while still staying within the base path, or (3) retreat to the previous base. Also remember a fielder without the ball has no right to block the base path. On a thrown ball, the runner has the right of way. This does not give the runner the right to charge into or violently collide with a fielder. Unsportsmanlike conduct covers this action. On a play at the plate, catchers should be taught to defend the inside of the diamond, while allowing a clear path to the base.

**No Headfirst Sliding:** A runner may not slide headfirst into a base on a dead run. They may dive back into a base if they are nearby. “Diving” is defined from a stationary or a position relatively close to the base that only requires 1 or 2 steps.

**Face Shield for Pitcher is REQUIRED** Face Shields for all infielders is encouraged.

### **Spirit of Play:**

- 1.) All players should get an opportunity to play both infield and outfield positions
- 2.) All players should get an opportunity to bat in different positions in the batting order. At the end of the season, the number of plate appearances should be equal for all players.
- 3.) This is an ALL-INCLUSIVE league. Everyone pays the same registration fee
- 4.) Every team makes the play-offs. There is no regular season champion
- 5.) During the Play-offs, it becomes more acceptable to shorten your fielding rotation and place players in the batting order and at fielding positions that will best help the team be more competitive, while still meeting the minimum play requirements and never sitting for 2 consecutive innings.

These rules are meant to serve as guidelines for the league. There are endless scenarios that will challenge interpretations that cannot be explicit covered in this summary. At the end of the day, common sense and sportsmanship should prevail on all issues. These rules are not meant to be argued to make a play go your way. Disagreements can be discussed between Head Coaches and conducted in a reasonable manner. Coaches cannot overturn a judgment call by an Umpire.

At any point during the season, the CHLL Board reserves the right to alter, add or eliminate certain rules that it determines will better serve the league.