

## **First Grade Softball (1<sup>st</sup> Grade) (aka Coach Pitch Softball)**

**Game Length:** 1 hour hard stop (please be courteous to the next game and do not run late). 1 hour should easily allow for 3 innings, but teams have been able to get in a 4<sup>th</sup> inning if they are organized and players hustle in and out between innings.

**Ball Size:** Each team has been supplied a minimum of 1 dozen correctly sized softballs. This level uses the 10inch safety soft pink and yellow softballs.

**Batting Lineup:** All players are in the batting line up, and teams shall use a continuous batting order. Each half inning will consist of batting once fully through the lineup (regardless of the number of players on each team). Coaches are encourage to rotate the line up throughout the season so that players have the experience of batting in different spots in the order.

**Defensive Positions:** Each team shall use all available players that attend each game in the field on defense even if one team has more than the other.

**There is no catcher at this level.**

1 player shall occupy the pitching circle on defense and must start within 1 step of the pitching rubber.

Players should fill all other natural softball positions and are not allowed to shift or overload their defense based on the hitter. Extra fielders should be used in the outfield.

Infielders may NOT start any closer than EVEN with the baseline. There is no creeping up on “Weaker hitters”

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

### **Playing the game:**

Coaches will pitch a soft pitch to each batter. Batters get 3 swing attempts at a pitched ball and shall revert to a tee if they do not successfully put the ball in play after 3 swings. This process starts again for each at bat. A Tee shall be kept nearby, and the Pitching Coach (or a 2<sup>nd</sup> Coach) shall place the ball on the Tee for the batter.

**No Bunts:** Any batted ball that does not travel more than 8 feet from home plate (designated by the white arch) is declared a foul ball whether it is hit off the tee or from a coach.

**Safe and Out:** Batters and Baserunners will be called safe or out based on the normal rules of play (force/tag/caught fly ball, etc.). This is meant to encourage hustle and create awareness of game situations for both offensive and defensive players. A player that is called out will return to the bench. The inning does not end if 3 outs are recorded before the team has batted through their order.

**Base running Rules:** If a ball is hit to the outfield (either on the fly or a hard-hit ground ball), batters/baserunners may advance a maximum of 2 bases at their own risk. On all other hits that do not leave the infield, batter/baserunners are limited to advance only 1 base (regardless of over throws or any other occurrence during the play). This includes the final batter in the inning, shall not automatically run around the bases (aka “Home Run”). This is meant to eliminate the “track meet” mentality, and to make scoring a run a meaningful event.

### **Coaches on the field:**

Offensive Base Coaches: Adult/Parent Base Coaches are allowed at first and third, but must be aware of the base running rules

Defensive Coaches: (Maximum of only 2 coaches allowed while on defense) Coaches are not allowed anywhere in the infield or behind home plate while their team is on Defense. Coaches are encouraged to stay towards the foul lines on the back side of the infield, and out of the way during plays. Let the players play the game and figure things out in the middle of the play.

**There are no umpires:** Since there are no umpires, we will utilize the age old “tie goes to the runner” approach so as to eliminate discussion or argument on close plays.

There are no balls and strikes called, and no walks or strike outs. No lead offs. No Stealing. No Score is kept. No records of wins and losses are kept for this league. No Play-offs. These rules are in place to create lots of situational game play, which creates a fun competitive learning environment.