

## **Major League Player Pitch Softball (5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> grade)**

### **League Philosophy:**

Our Player Pitch Level is divided into two Divisions (Majors and Minors). The Majors Division is for older more experienced players who are ready to compete in a standard game atmosphere against solid competition. Any 12-year-old must play in Majors (they cannot play in Minors). All coaches and parents should remember that the primary objectives are to continue to teach the children how to play the game, to develop their softball skills and knowledge of the rules, 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 2 hours (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 45 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 12inch 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 40ft. This requires a temporary mound at Each of our playing field which are located in the Wooden shed behind home plate.

**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). The maximum run limit applies to all innings, including the 6<sup>th</sup> or final inning played in a game.

**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. No play shall sit for 2 innings in a row. Coaches must emphasize the “Spirit of the Game” when deciding positions during the regular season.

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 is acceptable 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. No Player may pitch more than 3 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 3 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. If a pitcher is replaced in the game she IS allowed to reenter as a pitcher later in the game, subject to the same inning limits.

**Coach do not enter as Pitchers in the Major League Division**

**Bunting is allowed in the Major league Division.**

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

**Stealing is allowed ONLY from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, and from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Stealing of home plate is NOT allowed, even on a wild pitch/passed ball (this may be reconsidered for the Play-Offs). A runner at third may only advance on a ball put in play by a hit or bases loaded ball 4 walk. Any player that leaves a base is at risk of being tagged out. 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.

**Hit by Pitch** - If a batter is hit by pitch, they are awarded first base. The batter does not have the option to refuse a hit by pitch EXCEPT in the regular season only if a pitched ball bounces or rolls before hitting the batter, they may continue their at bat at the plate. The pitch is called ball and the count continues from there.

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

**Overthrows Out of Play** – Runners are award one additional base from where they are at the time the ball went out of bounds. All other overthrows that remain in play are the responsibility of the defense to secure the ball and stop the base runners.

**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.

**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.

**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**

### **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 explicitly 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.