

## **Intro to Softball (Pre K & K) (aka Tee Ball)**

**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. 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.

**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.

Infielders may NOT start any closer than EVEN with the baseline. NO creeping in on “weaker hitters”

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

### **Playing the game:**

All players shall hit from the tee for the first 3 weeks of games. Coaches set the ball on the tee.

Starting with week 4, coaches may identify certain players who have demonstrated the ability to consistently hit a coach-pitched ball. Those players shall be grouped in the back half of the order, and the Coach may pitch to those players for their at-bats. Batters get 3 swing attempts at a pitched ball and shall revert to a tee for the remainder of the game if they do not successfully put the ball in play. Coaches should re-evaluate this player for future games. It is not helpful to continue to pitch to a player in games if they do not demonstrate the ability to consistently hit the pitches. Keep working on it in practice until they are ready for sure. Not every player will progress to a Coach pitched ball by the end of this season.

**No Bunts:** A 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. All other hits, batter/baserunners are limited to advance only 1 base (regardless of overthrows 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.