

AURORA BASEBALL LEAGUE
INSTRUCTIONAL SOFTBALL RULES

GENERAL

- A. The objective of the ABL shall be to implant firmly in the youth of the community the ideas of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger, and happier youth and will grow to be decent, healthy, and trustworthy adults.
- B. All decisions of the umpire(s) are final.
- C. Team managers have the right to bench a player for disciplinary reasons other than ability or player performance, but must notify the other manager of the action. Once disqualified from playing in the game under this rule, the player cannot later play in that game for any reason or under any condition. The team manager should notify the league director when such disciplinary action has been taken.
- D. Games will start at their scheduled time. A forfeit will be declared 15 minutes after the scheduled start time if a team cannot field 8 eligible players at that time. If neither team is able to field 8 players, each team will be credited with a loss. No new inning shall begin after 8:30 PM or 2 hours from the start of the game whichever is earlier. No new inning shall begin if, in the umpire's discretion, it cannot be completed with enough daylight for safe play. The umpires will determine if conditions allow a game to start or continue or require suspension or end of the game.
- E. In the event of an official non-playoff game, which ends in a tie, each team will be credited with ½ win and ½ loss. Winning percentage will determine the regular season league champion. A game played but not declared an official game will be replayed from the start.
- F. In the event of an injury occurring during a play, the umpire(s) can, if they chose, stop all play, immediately declare the ball dead, and award the batter an/or runners bases as they deem necessary to negate the stoppage of play caused by the injury.
- G. An injured player may return to the game without penalty when recovered but only in their original position in the batting order.
- H. The home team will provide a new ball that will serve as the game ball. If that ball is lost or becomes unusable, the home team will provide their best used ball to complete the game.
- I. The catcher must wear all protective equipment while playing.
- J. Ground rules will be discussed before the start of each game with the managers and umpires. The umpire will decide if field conditions allow the game to start or if a forfeit will be declared.
- K. Teams may start and finish a game with as few as 8 eligible players. Players arriving late can be inserted in the game without penalty and do not have to play the required minimum amount if the game has progressed to the point that it is impossible for them to meet this requirement.

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- L. All games appearing on the league schedule will be played at the field, time, and date shown except as provided herein. Games will not necessarily be rescheduled except for the following reasons:
1. Weather conditions make it impossible to play the game scheduled.
 2. Weather conditions during the game make it necessary to stop the game before it has become an official game per league rules.
 3. A school activity, requiring the attendance of members of the team makes it impossible for the team to field the minimum number (8) of players required to play on the scheduled date. (Note: only the players affected by the school activity can be counted. Players out because of injury, vacation, ejection, etc., cannot be counted even if their absence is what brings the team below the minimum required.) If a school activity is the reason for the rescheduling of a game, the affected manager must notify the other manager and the league director at least 7 days before that game and provide the director a list of the players affected. Failure to meet these conditions will result in the game not being rescheduled.

Games rescheduled should be made up by the Saturday following the Saturday of the week of the originally scheduled date for the game, including holiday weekends. The make-up game will be determined by field availability and will not conflict with any regularly scheduled game. No team will be required to play more than three games in a week under any circumstances (Sunday through Saturday).

CONDUCT

- A. All coaches, players, and fans are to conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner at all times. There will be no harassment of any kind of the opposing team players by any player, coach or fan. Players or coaches may not talk to opposing players in an attempt to distract them, etc.
- B. The managers are responsible for the conduct of spectators on their side of the field as well as for the conduct of team members. The managers will make every attempt to discourage harassment of the players, umpires and others by spectators on their side of the field. The league director can enforce reasonable conduct at all times.
- C. Team members and coaches will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to have or use alcoholic beverages before, during or after any game or practice while functioning in their capacity as a member of the team. The use of any tobacco product is prohibited within the playing area or on the bench.
- D. One warning will be given to each player for unintentional throwing of the bat after a ball is struck. A second offence will be automatic out.
- E. Intentional throwing of bats, helmets, gloves and/or other equipment or objects is prohibited. A player or coach may be ejected from the game after one warning. If done while arguing a call or

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play, or if the object strikes another person, the umpire can eject the person without any prior warning.

- F. A player ejected from the game must leave the playing area and cannot sit on the bench. A player may remain on the bench if a guardian/parent is not present to take the individual from the playing area. Any coach ejected from the game will leave the playing area, may not sit on the bench and will be restricted to an area not less than 50 feet from the playing area in any direction. If an umpire ejects a team spectator, it is the duty of the manager to see that the ejected spectator leaves the area. The league director may assess additional penalties upon review of the ejection.
- G. All players and coaches, when not playing in the field, batting on deck, on base, coaching or warming up will remain on the bench. All equipment will be kept out of the playing area, including foul territory. Only one player is allowed in the on deck area at any time.
- H. All players must wear protective head gear with a face mask while at bat, on base, on deck, catching or pitching.
- I. Full uniforms are to be worn by all players, but an otherwise eligible player will not be prevented from playing because they do not have a uniform or a complete uniform.
- J. Players cannot wear steel spikes.

PLAYING RULES

- A. Current USSSA slow-pitch softball rules will apply except as altered by these rules.
- B. Distance between bases will be 60 feet. Pitching distance will be 36 feet. Games will be played and be official even if conditions do not permit the proper layout of the field, within reason, as determined by the umpire.
- C. All efforts should be made to provide even playing time in the field and develop players' skills at multiple positions. No player will sit more than one inning until all players have been out one inning. All players will play at least one inning in the infield within the first three innings of the game (catcher position does not qualify as infield). No player may play the same position more than 2 innings in a game.
- D. The maximum barrel size of a bat is 2 ¼ inches.
- E. The batting order will consist of each eligible player who will bat in the order shown in the lineup. Players arriving late will be inserted in the last place in the batting order. If one team has fewer eligible players than the other team, it will not affect the other team's batting order. A team will bat until three (3) outs are recorded or all team members have batted once.

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- F. All games will be **six (6)** innings in length unless additional innings are needed to break a tie or conditions do not allow six innings to be played. An official game will be **4** innings in length, **3 ½** if the home team is ahead.
- G. Overthrows at any base are dead balls and will not advance runners.
- H. Players will not, in the umpire's judgment, collide with another player in an attempt to dislodge the ball or prevent a play. This does not include a feet first slide which knocks the ball loose. If a collision is called, the runner is out, the ball is dead, and other runners must return to the last base they legally touched. When the umpire decides that unusual force and/or purposeful intent was involved in a collision, he may eject the offending player, no warning is required. Any runner colliding with any fielder in the act of fielding a ball will be automatically out and other runners will not be allowed to advance.
- I. Fake tags, at any base, even if the play is not being made at that base are prohibited. The ball will be declared dead (after all play is ended) and the umpire will award such bases as necessary to eliminate the obstruction.
- J. The defensive team will consist of 10 players (maximum), four of whom must be outfielders who play at approximately the same depth (no short fielder). If a team cannot field a full defensive team, they can play with less than 10 but at least **8** players. If a team has less than ten players one must be a catcher.
- K. There shall be two bases located at 1st base, one base in fair territory and one based in foul territory. The fielder shall use the base in fair territory to make the put out. The runner shall use the base in foul territory, unless the runner is making the turn to 2nd base and can do so in a safe manner to avoid collision with the defensive player at 1st base.
- L. No bunting is permitted.
- M. The infield fly rule is not in effect.
- N. Runners cannot lead off or leave the base until the ball is hit. Penalty for doing so is that the runner is out, the ball is dead, and no pitch called. Stealing is not permitted. Each team will be given a first time warning.
- O. No designated batter is allowed.
- P. There will be no base on balls awarded or players hit by a pitched ball will not be awarded first base. Strikes will be called including fouls, swinging strikes and balls not swung at but which legally enter the strike zone. Each player will bat until they safely reach first base or have six strikes called on them.
- Q. At the time of a pitch the pitcher must be on a designated spot outside the pitching circle.
- R. Two defensive coaches, who must be positioned behind the outfielders, are permitted on the field. Offensive coaches are permitted at first and third base and one **in the pitching circle**.

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- S. Any batted or thrown ball hitting the defensive coach is in play. Any thrown ball hitting an offensive coach is in play.
- T. A courtesy runner shall be allowed once per inning for injury reasons or anytime for a special needs child. It is the umpire's discretion when to allow a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner will be the last player that recorded an out for the team needing the courtesy runner.
- U. Umpire positions will be determined by Director of Umpires.

PITCHING

- A. Pitching machine distance is to be between 36' and 40'.
- B. Players will be given 6 pitches to put the ball in play. If on the 6th pitch the ball is hit foul and a defensive player does not make an out, then the batter continues to receive pitches as long as they continue to hit foul balls and no defensive player makes an out, but if the batter swings and misses or does not swing at the next strike then the batter is out.
- C. There will be no balls or strikes called. Whether the batter swings bat or does not swing bat it is counted as a pitch unless the umpire calls it a "no pitch". If after 6 pitches the ball is not put into play the batter is out, subject to the foul ball rule discussed above.
- D. Any ball that does not cross home plate delivered by a pitching machine will not be counted as a pitch. This will be at the discretion of the umpire.
- E. If the determination is made by both coaches that the pitching machine is not properly functioning, an adult pitcher will be used with each team providing their own adult pitcher. The adult pitcher will pitch underhand to every batter at all times.
- F. If an adult pitcher/machine operator intentionally interferes with a batted ball, the batter is out and runners cannot advance. If adult pitcher/machine operator unintentionally interferes with a batted ball, the ball is dead, the batter is not out, runners do not advance and the pitch will not be counted. The umpire will determine if the interference was intentional or not.
- G. A throw from any player to the adult pitcher/machine operator is a dead ball.
- H. Any batted ball hitting the pitching machine causing ball to land and stay in the pitching circle is a dead ball and the batter is awarded a single. A batted ball bouncing off the machine outside the circle is considered a fair ball and in play.
- I. Any throw from any defensive player that lands and stays in the pitching machine circle is considered the same as a ball thrown out of play.
- J. The defensive player in the pitchers position will not play inside the pitching machine circle and must stand on marks to the right or left side of the machine. The position will be marked by 2 "x's"

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on either side of machine 36' from home plate. These will be clear of the machine pitching area but will allow player to move freely to either side after the pitch is thrown. The defensive player in the pitcher position will be required to wear a batting helmet. No player shall enter the circle while the coach is preparing to operate the pitching machine.

- K. Coach will stand behind machine while feeding ball into machine and then step to side of machine to protect defensive player from running into machine.
- L. The pitching machines will be set up by the home team coach. Once the speed is set, it will stay at that speed for an entire inning. The home team coach will be required to return the machine to the designated spot after the game is finished.
- M. Coaches will be the only persons allowed to operate the machines. The umpire will be responsible for keeping all players out of the machine circle. No players at any time should run the pitching machine.
- N. In the event that the pitching machine is not functioning properly, then game shall be played under coach pitch rules.
- O. There will only be one game ball utilized throughout the game to help maintain pitch consistency. NOTE: THE OBJECT OF USING THE PITCHING MACHINE IS NOT TO THROW PERFECT PITCHES, BUT RATHER TO THROW A MORE CONSISTENT PITCH SO THAT BATTING AND FIELDING SKILLS OF THE PLAYERS CAN BE DEVELOPED AND IMPROVED.
- P. If using coach pitch, the coach must start from the pitching rubber or next to the pitching machine if it is on the playing field. The coach is not permitted to move the pitching machine once it is set.
- Q. Each batter shall receive (6) six pitched balls. If the batter does not hit one of the six pitches in fair territory, batter shall be declared out. Pitches should not have an arc and should simulate a level pitch such that is thrown by the pitching machine. No balls or strikes shall be called. Even in the case of an errant ball, it is still counted as a pitch

DEAD BALL

- A. A batted ball in play is dead and play is stopped only when:
 - 1. the umpire calls the play stopped; or
 - 2. an infielder has control of the ball in the infield and requests time out and receives it.
- B. Hash marks or halfway marks will be placed on the infield 30 feet from the base in the base paths. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a base runner has passed the hash mark when the ball has been called dead, the base runner is entitled to the next base without liability to be put out. Any base runners that have not passed the hash marks when time was called must return to the previous base unless that base is legally occupied by another teammate. If the runner cannot return to the previous

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base because it is legally occupied then that runner can advance to the next base. The lead base runner determines the advancement of all base runners.