**8U SOFTBALL Rules – Montgomery County Games***\*\* USSSA rules to be followed with the exception of the rule modifications listed below.\*\**

**FIELD SETUP (See diagram at end of rules)**

1. The bases are **55 feet** with halfway hash marks between first and second, second and third, and third and home.
2. The pitching distance is **38 feet** and is determined from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
3. The pitcher’s circle is 16 feet in diameter.
4. The Pitching Machine will be setup in the center of the circle. The machine speed will be set at **28 mph**.
	* The pitching machine speed is to remain constant for each batter on both teams. The speed of the machine should remain constant for the duration of the game.
	* Position can be adjusted, if the pitching machine pitches 3 consecutive pitches clearly outside the strike zone.
5. All fields should have running lanes going to First base during regular season, but it is required during tournament play.
6. No buckets or stools on the field during play.

**PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

1. 8U Softball Division play with an 11” optic yellow softball with a 0.47 core and 375 lb compression
2. Bats must be stamped with USSSA certification seal but does not have to be the most current stamp.
3. All batting helmets must be equipped with a facemask.
4. Face Masks required for ***all*** positions for Webo League girls. Webo League girls that are playing in Pitcher Position are required to have hair pulled back into a low bun. (No long Ponytails, Long Braids or loose hair.
5. No steal cleats

**GENERAL GAME RULES**

1. Games are **4 innings or 60 minutes** whichever comes first, but once an inning has started it must be finished.
2. An official game is three (3) innings if called for weather (which is determined at the discretion of the umpire). If the home team is ahead in the bottom of the third (3rd) inning it is official.
3. The offensive team shall be limited to **five (5) runs or three (3) outs** per inning, whichever comes first.
	* **Last inning unlimited runs** can be scored from both teams. Last inning is defined as the inning before the time limit expires does not have to be the 4th inning. The umpire will determine when the time limit warrants a notification to both head coaches that the last inning is to begin. 15 minutes remaining
4. Each team shall provide 1 parent or volunteer per game to have 2 umpires on the field during gameplay. The home team will provide the home plate volunteer umpire. The home plate umpire will have the final decision on any call.
5. A team roster consisting of players’ first name, last name, number, and official batting order shall be presented before the start of each game to the coach of the opposing team.
6. All players will be listed on the batting order and will bat in that order. Any late arrivals to the game will be added to the end of the roster (batting order). Any batter batting out of order or skipped, not due to injury during the current game or becoming sick, will be counted as an out. There is free substitution on defense. Any player skipped will sit out 6 consecutive outs.
7. Teams shall **field no more than 10 players and no less than 7 players**. If a team only has 7 players, they do not have to fill the catcher position so that they can have 2 outfielders. If the team has 8+ players, the catcher position must be filled. As long as 7 players can be fielded, there shall be no forfeit or rescheduling of the game. Teams with less than 10 players will not be penalized with outs at the empty spots in the batting order. There is no max number of players that can be on a team, only a max number of fielders, and all players on the team shall be listed on the batting order.
8. Alternates Rule:
	* During Regular Season – Teams can use alternates to bring the team up to 10 players.
		+ Alternates have to be added to the bottom of the batting order and play in the outfield.
	* During Tournament Play – Teams only can use alternates if they cannot field 8 players.
		+ Alternates can only fill the roster up to 8 players, and they have to be added to the bottom of the batting order and play in the outfield.
9. All play will stop upon injury to the player.
10. The go ahead rule is as follows:
	* 12 after 3
	* 10 after 4
	* 8 after 5
11. Regular season games will end in a tie if the time limit is up and the home team has batted.
	* The tie breaker rule will only be in effect for tournament play and will be as follows:
		+ The last batter from the previous inning will go to second base and become a base runner. The next person in the line-up will bat and will continue to go through the line-up until three outs or seven runs have been scored. The opposing team will do the same until one team goes up by at least one run. You do NOT start with any outs.

**PITCHING**

1. Each team will provide their own pitching machine operator.
2. Pitching machine can be adjusted, if the pitching machine pitches ***3 consecutive pitches clearly outside the strike zone****.*
3. The player pitcher must have one foot within the pitcher's circle and shall be positioned such that they are behind an imaginary line extending along the front of the pitching plate toward first and third baseline until the ball has been released from the pitching machine.
4. The pitching machine operator shall not interfere with the play of the ball.
	* Should the pitching machine operator interfere with a batted ball **intentionally**, **the batter shall be declared out.**
	* If the pitching machine operator is hit by the ball **unintentionally** it is a dead ball and the **batter is awarded first base**. All other runners advance if forced.
5. **Pitching machine operator can only coach the batter until she touches first base**. After that point she becomes a runner, and the operator cannot coach her any further. The pitching machine operator cannot coach any base runners on the field.
	* In the event that the pitching machine operator is coaching a base runner the runner nearest home plate will be declared out.
6. A defensive player shall not give the ball to the pitching machine operator until all play is dead. (Please instruct your operators to keep their hands down so a child does not make an attempt to give it back to the operator prior to play ending.)

**FIELDING**

1. All defensive players, with the exception of the catcher, who must be in the catcher’s box, shall be positioned such that they are behind an imaginary line extending along the front of the pitching plate toward first and third baseline until the ball has been released from the pitching machine. If a defensive player crosses the imaginary line before the ball is released from the pitching machine, the batter will be awarded first base. If first base is occupied, runners will advance one base if forced.
2. Pitcher position must start with 1 foot in the circle and behind the rubber until the ball is released from the pitching machine.
3. All **outfield players** must start with **both feet in the grass** and remain in the grass until the ball is put into play. If a violation occurs there will be one warning issued to each team per game. On the second offense the batter will be awarded first base.
4. When a batter hits a pitched ball, runners may advance until either being put out or the ball is returned to the pitcher's control in the pitching circle where the ball is considered dead and play stops. The defense is encouraged to attempt the out. If the player pitcher attempts to make a play by running through the circle or raises arm in forward motion while in the circle, the ball remains live. (i.e. Arm raised in a throwing position. See #34 Dead Ball)
5. When a ball is hit back to the pitcher while the pitcher is in the pitching circle, the player pitcher may elect to make a play on any base runner and the ball is considered live until returned to the pitcher's control inside the pitching circle. Runners advance at the risk of being put out. Should the pitcher retain control of the ball within the circle, the ball is considered dead and play stops with any runners advancing only to the next base only if forced by runners behind them or if the runner has crossed the halfway mark between bases before the pitcher gains control of the ball. If the bases are loaded and no play is made, all runners advance only one base.
6. **Dead** **ball**

Umpire throws Time when ball is dead.

* + Play is dead if batted balls hit the pitching machine or pitching machine operator as long as the operator was not intentionally causing interference with the batted ball.
		- Runner gets 1st base, and all other runners advance 1 base.
	+ Any ball that gets trapped under machine/within legs is a controlled dead ball.
		- Runners advance 1 base if forced.
	+ Any thrown ball that hits the pitching machine is a dead ball and
		- Runners get the base that they are going to.
1. **No Infield Fly rule**.
2. **Overthrow Rule –** Runners may only advance one (1) base on ALL overthrown balls. Second overthrown ball is considered a dead ball. No rolling the ball in attempt to get an out. We want to teach the girls throwing to the bases to get an out.
	* Runners may not advance a base on an overthrown ball from the catcher to the pitcher after a pitch.
	* If an overthrown ball remains in the field of play, the player may advance a maximum of one base, however the play is still live and the player can be thrown out.
	* If an overthrown ball leaves the field of play, the runner(s) are entitled to one base.
	* An overthrown ball to 3rd base the player *can’t* advance to home.

**BATTING & BASE RUNNERS**

1. Players will get a **maximum of seven (7) balls** from the pitching machine. If after seven pitches, the batter is unable to put a ball in play, the batter shall be out. If the seventh pitch results in a foul ball, the batter’s at bat will continue, though each subsequent pitch will follow the same 7th pitch rule.
2. If a batter swings and misses or hits a foul ball, it is a strike. **On the third strike**, excluding a foul ball, the **batter is out.**
3. Batters can position outside of the back of the box to hit balls that are coming in too high, if necessary, during the inning since the pitching machine is not to be adjusted until the end of an inning unless it is due to safety concerns or after a major hit agreed upon by both teams’ coaches. Batters cannot step out of the front or side of the box to bat a pitched ball.
4. **No bunting or slapping is allowed in 8U Softball Division**.
5. If batter is injured during the current game she can be skipped as a batter without taking an out.
6. Pinch runners are only allowed for a girl on base upon injury during the current game play. The furthest person in the line up, or last person out can then be used.
7. Runners are encouraged, but not required, to slide into bases when there is a defensive play being made.
	* ***Failure to slide and making excessive contact with a defensive player who is attempting to make an out will result in the runner being called out.***
8. **No lead offs or stealing are allowed**. The ball must make contact with the bat for the runner to leave the base.
9. Each team shall be permitted to station two coaches on the field. Coaches must remain in foul territory and may not in any way interfere with any play or player. Coaches cannot touch a runner. If an offensive coach violates this it is an automatic out for the runner. Defensive coaches must position themselves in the outfield grass foul territory.
10. **Drop 3rd strike rule is not applicable**.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of themselves, other coaches, their players and the spectators.
2. The home plate umpire has the final decision on regarding all rules and plays.
	1. On ANY play in which the umpire makes a call (safe/out, dead ball, foul ball, runner making the halfway point between bases), his call is to be respected and followed.
	2. Coaches are not to argue these calls with the umpire, as his decision is final. Coaches may ask for clarification, as long as it is not in a confrontational or disrespectful manner.
3. The umpire holds the authority of removal of a player, coach or parent that acts in a confrontational or disrespectful manner toward another player, coach, spectator or official.
	1. The umpire’s decision is final and is to be followed immediately. Failure to do so will be reported to league officials and may result in removal from team and/or banishment from our facilities.
	2. Any coach, assistant coach, umpire or attendee that is ejected will be reported and documented to their respective boards. If you fail to appear before the Board any child you are associated with will not be allowed to play until you have appeared before the board.
4. Both teams will keep score, with home team being the official book.
5. Home team is responsible for preparing the field before the game and clean up of field/dugouts and emptying trash after.
	1. Exception: Webo vs Webo these should be shared responsibly between both of the teams.
		* Teams share field prep before game. Field needs to lined per the diagram in these rules.
		* 8U requires half-way lines between 1st and 2nd and 2nd and 3rd bases. (optional for minors)
		* Home Team cleans up field after game
		* Away Team empties Trash can(s) at the field.
			+ Trash bags are located in the Softball barn and in concession stand.

**USSSA rules available at:** [**https://www.usssa.com/fastpitch/fastpitch-rules-legal-information**](https://www.usssa.com/fastpitch/fastpitch-rules-legal-information)[[CL1]](https://d.docs.live.net/26baba52851be0e3/Documents/Softball%20Rules%20for%20JuniorsandMinors%202020.docx#_msocom_1)

