

Summit Softball & Baseball League

Instructional League (Grades 1-2)

Playing Rules

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE: Teach fastpitch players the fundamentals of softball, provide them with an opportunity to practice and develop their skills, and help them learn good sportsmanship while having a positive, enjoyable experience as a participant.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

The Instructional League will be many players' first introduction to softball, and possibly to team sports in general. This league will teach the players the fundamental skills needed to play fastpitch softball, how to play each position in the field, and how to be a member of a team. The milestone skills the players should achieve in this league are the following:

- Basic throwing and catching mechanics and form
- Basic hitting mechanics and form (live and off tee)
- Baserunning fundamentals
- Basic understanding of all fielding positions and their roles on the field
- Understanding the purpose of the 1st and 3rd base coaches
- Understanding of basic situational plays
- Understanding of basic game play including force plays
- Understanding what it means to be a part of a team
- Understanding the concept of good sportsmanship and integrity
- The goal for fielding at this level is to either make the out at first base or to make a force play at second, third, or home.

Before moving on to the Transitional (Grades 3-4) League, every player should know where the field positions are, how to run the bases, and basic throwing/catching/hitting skills.

COACH MANDATES FOR GAME PLAY:

1. Coaches are required to change the fielding positions of the players every inning. Moving players to different positions on the field increases the likelihood of having a ball hit to them. Also, by playing different positions around the field, the players' knowledge of game situations will improve. All players must play both infield and outfield positions throughout the season.
2. Coaches are required to change the batting order every game. This will give every player a chance to bat first and last in the order at least once during the year. Suggestions for batting order include using their numbers sequentially or their names alphabetically being sure to switch the order often. Coaches may switch the batting order during the game inning by inning, at their discretion.

3. A scorebook should be kept for all games. There are no league posted standings and there is no playoff tournament for this league. However, players generally want to know the scores of the games they are playing. This is a game, after all, and there are scores to all games. The intent of this point is not to encourage an overly competitive environment, but to begin the development of our youth softball players' understanding of how the game is played and scored.

Player development, sportsmanship, integrity and enjoyment of the game take priority to winning.

RULES: USA Softball / ASA playing rules for Fastpitch will be the standard set of rules with the following exceptions, modifications, and clarifications:

GAME:

1. All jewelry shall be removed before play begins. This includes earrings, necklaces, and bracelets.
2. Roster batting is mandatory.
3. Catchers must wear full catcher's gear: catcher's helmet / mask, chest protector and shin guards at all times (they may use a regular fielding glove).
4. Helmets shall be worn by batters, base runners and on-deck batters at all times.
5. Only one player may be in the on-deck circle at any one time, and no player is allowed to practice swinging a bat in any other location. Coaches are to remind the players of the importance of this (and all other) safety rules and are to insist that they be followed at all times.
6. Games are six (6) innings or time limit, whichever comes first. Time limit is as follows; no new innings after 1 hour 15 min. Umpires must state and agree on start time with both coaches prior to game start. New inning begins with the final out of the prior inning.
7. When playing a game, an inning is over after 3 outs or when 5 runs have been scored. In no case will a team continue their at bat if 3 outs have been recorded. Once / If 3 outs are recorded by the defensive team, the inning is over.
8. If the fielding team records an out, the runner being tagged or forced out leaves the field and returns to the bench.
9. The number of defensive coaches on the field should not exceed two.
10. The team in the field may use a maximum of 10 fielders. Four of these must be outfielders. Use of an extra infielder is not permitted. All four (4) outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass.
11. No player should be out of the field (on the bench) for two (2) consecutive innings, and no player shall sit out for the second time until everyone has been out once.
12. Speed up rule is in place: If the next innings catcher is on base and there are two outs, they may return to the dugout to put equipment on. Whoever made the last out will become the baserunner.
13. Complete uniforms must be worn at all games.

PITCHING & BATTING: The 1/2 Instructional League is coach pitch with tee relief.

1. **Pitching:** The 1/2 Instructional League is coach pitch with tee relief.
 - a. Coaches from the offensive team shall pitch to the batter. The coach pitcher must make every effort to avoid interfering with the defense on batted balls.
 - b. The player pitcher shall stand to the left or right side of the coach pitcher inside the pitcher's circle for fielding purposes.
 - c. Coaches are to pitch from 35' (standard 10U pitchers plate), however are permitted to pitch from as close as 20' at their discretion based on the ability of the batter.
 - d. If after 6 pitches the batter is unable to hit a pitched ball, a coach of the batting team shall place a stationary tee slightly in front of (not on top of) home plate and the batter will hit from the tee. In no case shall a coach pitch more than 6 pitches to any batter. The goal of allowing a closer pitching distance is to maximize batted balls off of live pitching and limit the use of a tee.
 - e. There will be no walks or strikeouts.
 - f. If a player is hitting from a stationary tee, the ball must travel 10' or it is a foul.
 - g. All coaches should ensure that the batting tee is moved off the field if there is going to be a play at the plate.
2. Bunting and stealing are not allowed.
3. A hit batter is not awarded first base.

BASERUNNING:

1. Infield Hit - Base runners are limited to one base on all batted balls hit in the infield. No advances are allowed for overthrows to any base.
2. Outfield Hit - Base runners may take additional bases on all batted balls hit into the outfield, as defined by any ball that goes 10 feet beyond the base path or any ball that is fielded by an outfielder. The umpire must carefully note where the runners are at the moment the ball has been returned to the infield and is controlled by an infielder. The play is not "dead" once an infielder secures the ball. Runners remain in jeopardy of being put out. At the end of the play, the umpire will decide the proper position for the baserunners.
 - a. If the base runner is not at the halfway point between the bases once the ball is secured by an infielder, the runner will be sent back to the previous base.
 - b. If the runner is at the halfway point or beyond and the ball is secured by an infielder, the runner may advance, at the runner's risk of being put out.
 - c. If the runner is at the halfway point or beyond and the ball is secured by an infielder, and that infielder attempts to make a play on a base runner and the ball is overthrown, the runner cannot advance to the next base. (because it had been previously secured by an infielder).
3. Leading: The runner may come off the bag with contact or may take a lead as the ball crosses the plate. Runner may not advance if the ball is not put into play, but she is in jeopardy of being put out.
4. If the batter is hitting from a tee, baserunners may not leave the base until the ball is batted into fair territory.

5. In order to keep pace of play, catchers should be assisted by a coach of their team. A parent or coach of the defensive team should stand behind the catcher and umpire in the backstop to field passed balls and return them to the offensive pitcher either by throwing to the pitcher or giving to the catcher to have them throw to the pitcher.

UMPIRES: All games will be umpired by youth umpires from the 7/8 SSBL softball league. There will be a minimum of 1 umpire for each game. Umpires will be positioned behind the infield basepaths so as to not interfere with defensive play and have a clear view of the full field. Coaches may ask umpires for rules clarifications, however any judgement call by the umpire stands as called and is not appealable by any coach. Coaches are reminded to show sportsmanship and integrity as teaching opportunities to their team members.

Revised: March, 2023