

Major League Player Pitch Softball (5th - 7th grade) 2024

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 3rd 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 chllsbgamescores@gmail.com. Please CC the opposing coach to prevent discrepancies. If there is a discrepancy on a score that has been posted, please raise the discrepancy to the opposing coach and commissioner via email.

Ball Size: Each team has been supplied with a bucket of correctly sized softballs for practice. This level uses the 12inch Little League approved yellow softballs. Each team has also been provided with 12 Little League games balls. Each team will provide one (1) NEW game ball to the umpire prior to the start of the game and will receive one (1) USED game ball back at the end of the game.

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 fields. The temporary mounds are stored 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 6th or final inning played in a game.**

Defensive Positions: 9 Players in normal positions on defense, including a Catcher.

- Players are only allowed to play the same position for 2 innings in a row.
- No player shall sit for a second time before all other players sit once.
- All players shall play at least 1 inning (3 consecutive outs) at an Infield position.

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 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 six (6) outs per game in the Regular Season.

- Outs can stretch over 3 innings.
 - E.g., Pitcher enters as a reliever in 1st inning with 2 outs and gets the 3rd out, the pitcher is only counted for 1 out. If the same pitcher continues for the next inning, that counts as 4 outs. The pitcher is only eligible to pitch 2 outs in the following inning.
- If a pitcher starts an inning, that counts as 1 out (minimum).
- "5 run mercy inning",
 - If only 1 pitcher is used, that counts as 3 outs.
 - If two pitchers (or more) are used, each pitcher is charged with at least 1 out.
 - The pitcher at the end of the inning is also charged with an out.
 - E.g., the 2nd pitcher in a "5 run inning" is charged with 1 out when entering and charged with a 2nd out when the 5th run crosses to end the inning.
- There is not change to the amount of innings a player can pitch in the Play-offs.

Coaches 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 for all bases. Stealing of home plate is allowed, even on a wild pitch/passed ball. 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. The pitch is called ball and the count continues from there.

No Dropped 3rd Strike – Batter is out.

Overthrows Out of Play – Runners are awarded 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.

Stoppage Of Play – Upon a ball being put in play by a batter, play continues until the ball is ruled Out of Play as defined above; or until the ball is secured by any defensive player inside the pitching circle. Umpires will declare "Time" and all baserunning will stop. If a baserunner is past mid-point to the next base before the defense secures the ball, the runner will proceed to the advancing base. If not beyond the mid-point, the Umpire will direct the runner to return to the previous base.

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.

Warm-up Pitches between innings: Pitchers are limited to a maximum of 5 warm up pitches between innings – less is encouraged. This is intended to keep the game moving, as the goal is to play 6 innings in the allotted time. Coaches are responsible for ensuring a new pitcher is adequately warmed up while their team is batting.

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. Remember, we use local teenagers to umpire our league. They will not be perfect, nor should they be expected to be.

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 will 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. Face Shield for Infielders is encouraged.

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 defensive position requirements detailed above.

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.