

# RIVER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

## Delaware Twp, Hopewell, Lambertville, Newtown, Plumstead, Solebury, Upper Makefield, Ewing 12U - RULES

Unless otherwise noted in these rules, the River League Girls Softball shall be governed by the rules of USA Softball

### **GENERAL RULES:**

- a. There must be a minimum of seven (7) players in the field in order to start a game. A maximum of ten (10) players - six (6) infield and four (4) outfield - may play at any one time. All outfielders must be on the grass beyond the infield cutout or at least ten (10) feet from the nearest base.
- b. Six (6) innings per game, although both coaches may agree to shorten the game to a lesser number of innings. The game clock starts with the umpire, and the official time is kept by the umpire. No new inning can start 1 hour and 45 minutes from that time. If an inning concludes (3 outs recorded during home team at bat) after 1 hour 30 minutes, the umpire may declare the next inning to be the last inning that will be played. This declaration must be made before the top half of that inning begins (before the away team bats).
- c. The home team is responsible for scheduling an umpire for each game. However, if an umpire is not available, an acceptable substitute umpire may be used if agreed upon by both coaches. If no acceptable substitute is available then a coach from the team in the field will be responsible for calling balls and strikes and a coach from the team batting will call outs on the bases. The Home Team Score book will be the book of record.
- d. Twelve (12) inch softball. All bats must be official softball bats. Wooden bats are not permitted.
- e. Any player who is catching must wear a helmet, mask, shin guards, and chest protector, including during warm-ups. All batters, base runners, "on-deck" batter(s) in the field of play or warming up, and players coaching a base must wear a helmet complete with face protectors. Face protectors must have the phrase "meets NOCSAE Standard" permanently affixed. The use of kneepads, sliders, or long pants is strongly encouraged so that knees are protected at all times when batting or running.
- f. Metal cleats are not permitted. Sneakers or rubber spikes are allowed. Jewelry is not permitted except for Medic alert bracelets and necklaces.
- g. Sliding is permitted and encouraged, but not required at any base. No head-first sliding permitted.
- h. The inning ends when the team at bat has three outs or as a result of the ten batter rule. Exception is in the last inning when an unlimited number of runs can be scored. "Last" inning will be determined by the umpire.
  - 1) All games are considered official after 4 innings, or if the home team is leading, after 3 ½ innings
  - 2) In the event of a game being shortened due to darkness, the score will revert back to the last full inning played.
  - 3) If a game is suspended due to weather, coaches may agree upon another date to continue game. The game will continue from the last full inning played before the suspension. At the first sight of lightning or thunder heard; the game must be stopped and the players removed from the field.
  - 4) At the discretion of both coaches, a mercy rule can be put in play with a lead of 12 runs in or after the 4<sup>th</sup> inning. Coaches can mutually decide to continue to play.
- i. Rosters will be submitted to the designated Roster Collector with birthdates of each player. Age cut-off date is January 1. Exceptions for players need to be requested to League Directors of each Township, at

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- j. Coaches **MUST** teach good sportsmanship and exhibit common sense. River League is a recreational softball program and encouraging the growth of all players is first priority. Any coach or player using profanity will be ejected from the game and may not return. If tournament season, coach will be removed from remainder of tournament games.

### **BATTING:**

- a. Bunting is permitted
- b. Drop Third strike is **NOT** in effect.
- c. **NO** infield fly rule.
- d. On fields having an outfield fence, the following rules will apply:
  - 1) A batted ball carrying out of the field of play and over the fence in fair territory shall be declared a home run.
  - 2) A batted ball which is deflected off a fielder in fair territory and carries over the outfield fence without hitting the ground shall be declared a home run;
  - 3) A batted ball that first hits the ground in fair territory and then bounces or is deflected off a fielder over the fence shall be declared a ground rule double;
  - 4) A batted ball that rolls under an outfield fence in fair territory or is deflected off a fielder in fair territory and rolls under an outfield fence shall be declared a ground rule double.
- e. All players on a team will bat continuously, even if not playing in the field that inning. Players arriving after the start of the game will be added to the end of the batting order.
- f. At the first occurrence of a bat being thrown more than 6 feet from the batter box each team will receive a warning. After this warning batters will be called out on subsequent bats that are thrown and the ball declared dead.
- g. The **Ten Batter** rules applies:
  - 1) *If* a team bats ten batters in an inning the tenth batter will be played as if there are 2 outs.
  - 2) *If* a tenth batter in an inning hits a fair ball, play will continue **until** the third out is made at any base, or returned to the pitching mound.
  - 3) *If* the tenth batter walks or is HBP, the batter will be awarded **two** bases and base runners who are forced will advance. When the batter reaches second base the inning is over. If there are base runners forced to score, the runs **WILL** count.

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### **BASE RUNNING:**

- a. If a batter is hit by a pitch, it will be the umpires' **discretion** to award the player first base, if batter made a reasonable attempt to avoid the pitch.
- b. On a hit ball, the batter and runner(s) may advance as many bases as possible until the ball is controlled by the pitcher in the circle. If a runner is more than halfway to the next base when the pitcher gains control of the ball in the circle, the runner may advance to that base. Runners may advance on overthrows to all bases (including home plate) or an overthrow to the pitcher from the catcher, at the risk of being thrown out. If any overthrow goes out of play, runners may advance one base (including home plate) beyond the base they were approaching.
- c. The runner must remain on the base until the ball **crosses** the plate. Steals of second, third and home are permitted. If while attempting to throw out a stealing runner the catcher overthrows the base, **no further advance** by any runner is permitted. This includes overthrows to a pitcher covering home in an effort to stop a steal of home. Any other runner(s) who had not attempted to steal on the pitch **may not** advance.
- d. Runners may tag up on fly balls.
- e. If there are two outs in the inning a pinch runner may be substituted for the catcher in the next inning if she is on base in order to speed up play. Pinch Runner will be the last batted out.
- f. There is **NO** Slide or Surrender, however players should **AVOID CONTACT or be CALLED OUT** on close plays at the plate and encouraged at second and third base, as well, in order to avoid collisions. If player collides due to not sliding then she will be called out. A fielder who is putting a tag on a player to make an out is not considered a collision. Catchers or fielders **CANNOT** block bases if they are not making a play.
- g. Delayed steals. Delayed steals are permitted between 2nd and 3rd or 3rd and Home, (not 1st to 2nd). A Delayed steal will be defined as a base runner not immediately running towards the next base after the ball crosses the plate, but rather takes a lead in the baseline between the two bags, with some continuous motion forward. **(There is no look back rule)** Once the runner's motion stops or shifts back to her original base for any reason, she must return to that base. If a play is made on said runner by the fielders, regardless of direction of movement, runner is again free to continue to next base or retreat at her own risk of being thrown out.
- h. Continuous walks are permitted. Batter/runner, (after ball four is called) **MAY** at her own risk, when second base is open, attempt to continue through first base on to second base. Player/runner must have continuous motion to and through first base in the attempt to second, regardless of location of ball (in circle or not). If at any point, the runner stops/hesitates or has a motion backwards with no attempt by the defense to make a play on said runner, the attempt has been forfeited and the runner is called out. If an opposing player makes a play on the continuing base runner (including a fake throw), the ball is then considered a "live ball" and any runner may continue to second or retreat at their own risk of being thrown out.

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### **PITCHING:**

- a. Each pitch will be from a pitching rubber located 40' from the back end of home plate. The pitcher must start her motion with at least one foot on the rubber. The ball must be delivered in one continuous motion and one foot must be in contact with the pitching rubber through release of the ball.
- b. A player may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game. One (1) pitch during an inning constitutes an inning pitched. Innings pitched do not have to be continuous. Coaches will confer about the # of innings if another pitcher is not available.
- c. Any pitcher who hits 2 batters in any one inning shall be removed from the pitcher's mound for the remainder of that inning and replaced with another pitcher from the team. The first pitcher will have the opportunity to return to the pitcher's mound for another inning. However, Three (3) hit batters will result in the removal of that pitcher for the remainder of the game. Sufficient time should be given to allow any new pitcher to warm up.