

2023 Softball League Rule – 12U/14U Division
Revised 3.23.23

Division Requirements

- 1) All players must wear a full conforming uniform during game play, unless both coaches agree otherwise.
- 2) The official ball is the 12-inch USA certified ball with a 0.47 core.
- 3) All players must have equal playing time. All players must be presented in the infield within the first three (3) innings of a game. If you have special circumstances, they must be approved by a softball commissioner. This rule only applies during regular season, and does not apply during tournament play.
- 4) Players may not taunt an opponent. Derogatory comments are not allowed. Violation results in a warning, the second violation will result in an ejection from the game.
- 5) The umpire's rulings are final and non-contestable. Coaches, players, and fans will exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Profanity is strictly prohibited. Violation results in a warning, the second violation will result in an ejection from the game. Coaches will be given a STRICT guidelines on umpire confrontation. Obtaining explanation of an umpire's call will ONLY take place between innings WITH BOTH COACHES PRESENT. Coach to umpire discussion will only occur with both coaches present at any time. No exceptions. Umpires will not engage in mid-inning confrontation. A warning will be issued by the umpire to the coach. Any further infraction of this rule will result in coach ejection. BALLS AND STRIKES WILL NOT BE ARGUED, PERIOD. Coaches will also be given strict guidelines on arguing balls and strikes. This is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy. Any coach reported of this infraction will be reprimanded.
- 6) All coaching staff must sign coach's code of conduct and all parents must sign the parent's code of conduct, both to be filed with the league prior to the first game or the game is forfeited.
- 7) USSSA rules will be used where not specified on this document.
- 8) *** Substitutions will only be permitted when a team can roster less than nine (9) players in any given game. Subs can only be provided by 10U and 12U players. The sub will bat last in the line up and be permitted to ONLY play in the outfield. You may only use subs to complete a nine (9) player roster. Teams will NEVER be forced to take an out for rostering less than nine (9) players.
- 9) *** Water Rule. Coaches may call a game time out to provide water to players. This time out will be a 30 second time out. In the event a pitcher needs this time out, there will not be a mound visit conversation. This rule will not be used to avoid mound visit situations. Umpire will deem if the water time out needs to be counted as a mound visit. Coaches are allowed two (2) time outs per inning.
- 10) ***Mound Visit Rule. The head coach shall be permitted to visit any one pitcher TWICE IN AN INNING, but, on the second visit to the pitcher's mound, the pitcher must be removed. The manager shall meet the pitcher either on the pitcher's mound or at the baseline and no other player, except the catcher, shall join in the meeting.

Equipment Requirements

- 1) Defensive face masks are required in the infield.
- 2) Batting helmet with face mask must be worn while batting and running the bases.
- 3) Heart guards are required for pitcher's helpers. This is a no exception rule. Umpires will be checking heart guards between every inning.
- 4) All bats must be USA/USSSA approved. Bats will be subject to inspection at any given time. In the event a bat is deemed illegal, the violating player will be removed from the game.
- 5) ***Metal cleats are illegal to use in this league.
- 6) All catchers will wear appropriate catcher's gear provided by their league.

Batting

- 1) Each half inning will end when the offensive team has three (3) outs or the offensive team has scored five (5) runs.
- 2) Each team's batting order will include the entire roster with unlimited substitutions. Teams are required to have at least 8 players to start the game and do not have to take an out during league play. During tournament play, USA rule applies.
- 3) Bunting is allowed.
- 4) Batters will not throw bats and will be warned by the umpire once for the violation. This warning will be a team warning, and the next violation will result in the acting batter being declared out.

Base Running

- 1) Coaches may not assist a runner, via any physical contact. Any violation will result in the runner being declared out.
- 2) In the event of a dropped 3rd strike pitch, the batter may attempt to advance to 1st base if 1st base is unoccupied. If there are two outs and there is a drop third strike, the batter may run, even if 1st base is occupied. The defense can attempt a force out at any eligible base. If the batter exceeds 4 feet out of the baseline they are considered out.
- 3) Runners are permitted to steal 2nd base, 3rd base, and home plate, once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

Fielding

- 1) The defensive team will consist of ten (10) players: six (6) infielders (1st base, 2nd base, shortstop, 3rd base, catcher, and pitcher) and four (4) outfielders.
- 2) Outfielders must start the play with both feet in the grass.
- 3) No infielder, except pitcher, will be positioned closer to home plate than the pitching rubber prior to the release of the pitch.
- 4) Distance from the front of the pitching rubber to the back point of home plate is 40 feet. The circle around the pitcher's mound will be 16 feet in diameter.
- 5) Pitching will be limited to two (2) consecutive innings in any given game. Free reentry. If a pitcher only pitches one pitch in an inning, that counts as one of their innings pitched. This rule will be on a trial basis and will be reevaluated after week 3 pending the outcome of the competitiveness of the games. The idea behind this rule is to not overuse pitchers and take mind of the arm wear they can face in the Rec season by pitching every inning of the entire season.

- 6) The pitcher can step back or start back when delivering the pitch and must have one (1) foot in contact with the ground when the pitch is delivered. If the pitcher uses a windmill motion, only one (1) revolution may be made. If the pitcher uses a whip motion, only one (1) whip may be made.

Game Length

- 1) Regulation game time is one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) from the first pitch or seven (7) innings, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin after the time limit has expired. New inning begins immediately following the third out of the previous innings. If the game is tied at the completion of a full inning, international tie break rules apply (the last batted out from the previous inning start on 2nd base with no outs and the batting order resumes where left off). No time limit during tournament play, will play complete seven (7) innings.
- 2) Game is complete if a team is leading by more than fifteen (15) runs after four (4) innings or ten (10) runs after five (5) innings.
- 3) The following will be used for rain out and delay of game. The game is a complete game at the completion of four and one-half (4.5) innings, if the home team is ahead, or five (5) innings if the visiting team is ahead. In the event a game is delayed by rain and either of these conditions has been met, the game is over and the score is final. If, however, neither of these two conditions has been met, the game will be suspended and the game will restart with a new time limit of one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) of play as soon as possible. The umpire and coaches may agree to stop a game that results in a tie in the event of a rain delay.

Code of Conduct

All persons associated with Mt. Vernon Optimist Softball program, including coaches, players, umpires, parents, and attendees, will conduct themselves both responsibly and courteously. If a person's conduct results in an ejection, they will be asked to leave the property. They will have five minutes to comply and if they refuse, the offending team will forfeit the game.

Any "trash talking", derogatory comments, profanity, or abusive language toward a coach, player, umpire, parent, or attendee will result in a team warning. A second offense, during any will result in immediate ejection and suspension from the next scheduled game.

Any intentional physical contact by a coach, player, umpire, parent, or attendee will result in immediate ejection and suspension from attending Mt. Vernon Optimist sporting events for the remainder of the season.