

2023 Softball League Rule – 8U 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 11-inch, USA certified ball.
- 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 ejection from the game. This includes derogatory chants from the dugout.
- 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 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) Coaches will exchange batting line ups before the game and they may not be changed.
- 8) USSSA rules will be used where not specified in this document.
- 9) *** Substitutions will not be permitted for 8U. Furthermore, no outs will be given for less than 9 players, ever.

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 approved (tee ball bats are not allowed)
- 5) Metal Cleats are not allowed in this league.
- 6) All catchers will wear appropriate catcher's gear provided by their league.

Batting

- 1) Coach pitch will be used for all girls. Each batter will get three (3) swinging strikes or five (5) pitches from the coach. The batter is not out if the third strike or the fifth pitch is a foul ball. The batter will continue to bat until the ball is hit into play or there is a swinging 3rd strike. There are no walks in this age division.

*** 8U will introduce player pitch half way through the season (game 7 and on). Player pitchers will throw three (3) pitches. If the batter does not hit any of those three (3) pitches and does not strike out on those pitches, the pitching coach will come in to pitch. At this point, Rule #1 will take effect with a clean count. Player will pitch from 30 feet with one foot on the pitching rubber. Umpire will not penalize 8U pitchers for what any coach deems an illegal pitch. This rule change is about developing and exciting future pitchers. Coaches will, in turn, encourage players to hit off player pitcher. Player

pitcher CAN strike out a batting opponent if three (3) strikes occur. This will ONLY occur for the first two (2) innings, then will revert back to coach pitch.

2) No bunting is allowed.

3) Batter MUST remain inside the batter's box when contacting the ball. Batter can not step out of the box and make contact nor can batter step on home plate and make contact. Result is a warning for the team on first infraction and an out from that point forward.

4) Pitching coach must have one (1) foot in contact with the pitching rubber when the pitch is delivered unless the rubber is set past 35 feet, then they may move up to 35ft. The coaches' pitch will be underhand in order to teach the batter how to hit this type of pitch. Arc of pitch may not be higher than the batters' head. The pitching coach is not allowed to coach the batter or base runners after the pitch is delivered.

5) Distance from the front of the pitching rubber to the back point of home plate is 35 feet. The circle around the pitcher's mound will be 16 feet in diameter.

6) The pitching coach must make every attempt to move out of the way of a batted ball. If no attempt is made, and there is contact with the pitching coach it is considered interference and the batter will be declared out. Intentional interference by the pitching coach will result in the batter being declared out. The pitching coach must make every attempt to avoid being in the way of the pitcher's helper making a play on a batted ball. Intentional interference with the pitcher's helper will result in interference and the batter being declared out.

7) Each half inning will end when the defensive team has gotten three (3) outs, or the offensive team has scored five (5) runs.

8) 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) Runners may advance one (1) base on **each** defensive overthrow up to 3rd base. If an attempt is made on a runner advancing to another base after an overthrow and another overthrow occurs, the runner may advance, but only up to 3rd base. You can only score from actions of a batter. Actions of a batter will be ceased once an error occurs. The umpire will deem when an error occurs and will signal to that effect. Once that has occurred, no runner can score from 3rd base unless actions of a batter is still in effect. If no error has occurred, runners may advance freely with the understanding they may be thrown out. (example: batter hits the ball to the fence. Runners may continue to run until an error occurs, no matter where the error occurs, or the bases are cleared. The umpire will determine what is a throwing error. Once a throwing error occurs, runners must hold at 3rd base.) The chalk line will determine which base the base runner will be awarded once a dead ball is called. This is at the discretion of the umpire when the time out is called and cannot be argued.

2) Coaches may not assist a runner, via any physical contact. Any violation will result in the runner being declared out

3) Runners may not leave any base until the batter makes contact with the ball. If the runner jumps off the base on a swinging strike the batter will be declared out.

4) Stealing of bases is not allowed in this age division.

Fielding

1) The defensive team will consist of ten (10) players: six (6) infielders (1st base, 2nd base, shortstop, 3rd base, catcher, and pitcher's helper) and four (4) outfielders.

2) Outfielders must start in the outfield grass prior to each swing.

3) No infielder, except pitcher's helper, will be positioned closer to home plate than the pitching rubber prior to the release of the pitch.

4) Pitcher's helper shall play no closer than the pitching rubber until the ball is hit into play. The pitcher's helper must wear either a batting helmet with a facemask or a face guard. The pitcher's helper is also required to wear a heart guard, that is provided by the league to each team.

- 5) Two (2) coaches from the defensive team may be stationed in the outfield grass in order to provide defensive instruction.
- 6) Play has ended and the ball is dead once a defender is in the baseline directly in front of the lead runner with her hands up and calling for time and awarded time by the umpire; or the ball is under control by the pitcher's helper with both feet inside the pitcher's circle with her hands up and calling for and awarded time; or pitching coach has possession of the ball.

Game Length

- 1) Regulation game time is one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) from the first pitch or six (6) 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. Tie games during regular season can be called in this division. If the game is tied at the completion of a full inning during tournament play, international tie break rules apply (the last batted out from the previous inning start on 2ⁿ base with no outs and the batting order resumes where left off). No time limit during championship game, will play complete six (6) 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 three and one-half (3.5) innings, if the home team is ahead, or four (4) 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 (1:00) of play as soon as possible.

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.