



# Spring 2025 Pelican Park Softball Coaches Handbook

## **GIRLS SOFTBALL**

### **COACHES INFORMATION FROM PELICAN PARK**

Thank you for volunteering as a Pelican Park Youth Sports softball coach. We could not have a successful softball program without your volunteer hours. We have prepared some general information regarding Pelican Park and the softball season.

#### **1. ORGANIZATION**

##### **a. Objectives**

- i. The objectives of the Pelican Park Youth Sports Softball Board are to:
- ii. Provide a fun, safe and recreational Softball environment.
- iii. Teach sound softball fundamentals.
- iv. Promote sportsmanship within the team concept.

#### **2. LEAGUE AFFILIATION**

- a. Affiliation with a national association is not mandatory.
- b. Park Staff will work together to research and determine the proper affiliation and if affiliation is needed.
- c. Presently the softball program is affiliated with PONY softball and is subject to change.
- d. A registration fee is paid to register every team in our program for ages 7 and above.

#### **3. LEAGUE STRUCTURE**

- a. The Pelican Park program is designed to emphasize regular season recreational play. The Pelican Park program will offer play as follows:
  - i. 5/6-year-old T-Ball
  - ii. 7/8-year-old coach pitch
  - iii. 9/10-year-old player pitch (fast pitch)
  - iv. 11/12-year-old player pitch (fast pitch)
  - v. 13/15-year-old player pitch (fast pitch)
- b. While Pelican Park is not a member of USSSA League, we will be using their rule book if the league specific rules listed below do not address a rule.

#### **4. COACH SELECTION**

- a. All individuals interested in becoming a head coach or an assistant coach shall make their name, and desired age group available to a Pelican Park by completing the Pelican Park Head Coaching Application. The criteria for the selection of Head Coaches are set by the Park and include results of parent evaluation forms from previous seasons or sports. Any ejections from games, reports of bad behavior will be looked at and accounted for.

- b. Qualifications for Head Coach include previous coaching experience, softball knowledge, people skills, relationships with kids, even-tempered and time to commit. Head coach selection should not occur until completion of the evaluation process.
- c. **ALL COACHES MUST PASS THE PARK'S BACKGROUND CHECKS. ID cards designating you as an approved coach MUST be worn at all games.**
- d. The head coach can designate one assistant coach prior to the start of the team formation. (If both head coach and the designated assistant coach's daughters evaluate in the first round the coaches cannot coach together.) It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure that all volunteers adhere to all policies set forth by the Board.

#### **5. CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- a. All coaches must sign the Coaches' Creed before assuming responsibilities.
- b. All coaches serve at the pleasure of the Park and can be removed with or without cause by the Park.
- c. Additionally, all parents are required to sign a code of conduct prior to the beginning of season play to ensure that the expectations of the organization are clearly understood.
- d. Parents will acknowledge the Parent Code of Conduct agreement when online registration is completed.

#### **6. FIELD OR COMPLEX AREA COACH/DIRECTOR/PARENT CONDUCT**

- a. No alcohol, drug, or tobacco usage.
- b. No use of foul or abusive language.
- c. No violent play or physical abuse.
- d. Pelican Park rules are posted at each complex.

#### **7. NO UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT.**

#### **8. COACH EXPECTATIONS**

- a. The following is not an all-inclusive list designed to dictate the behavior of coaches. However, it is a guidance document for what the Pelican Park expects of each coach. The intent of these expectations is that all, including but not limited to, coaches and the Board, are moving the entire program toward an overall higher level of performance and competition for all the girls in the program.

#### **9. RESPONSIBILITY –**

- a. The Head Coach is accountable for the actions of themselves, their assistant coaches, parents, and players. Failure to address inappropriate behavior by anyone associated with the team may lead to suspension. As the culture leader, your attitude toward the game and officials will influence both players and parents. Set a positive example and encourage a respectful attitude from everyone. Any issues with players or parents should be reported to Pelican Park for resolution.

**10. TEACH THE PLAYERS –**

- a. Instruct players on hitting, fielding, and throwing, while also teaching them to play various positions. Emphasize all the fundamental aspects of the game and ensure they develop the essential skills needed to play. Focus on the entire team, not just the top two or three players, so that every girl shows noticeable improvement throughout the season.

**11. DO NOT COACH TO WIN AT ALL COSTS –**

- a. Although Pelican Park softball is a recreational league, we keep score to determine a winner and a loser, adding a level of competitiveness. However, the primary goals remain to teach fundamentals, sportsmanship, teamwork, and to ensure players have fun. It is equally important to teach not only how to win but also how to lose with dignity and grace. Promoting good sportsmanship is essential.

**12. DO NOT QUIT JUST BECAUSE YOU THEORETICALLY CAN NOT WIN –**

- a. If your team is down by 10 runs after the fourth inning, victory is out of reach. However, if time allows, play the fifth inning—and play to win. The girls should learn to compete and give their best effort, even when the odds are against them. They should never be taught to give up or quit!

**13. DO NOT ARGUE WITH OFFICIALS OR FANS –**

- a. A coach or assistant coach may face disciplinary action for arguing with umpires, fans, or scorekeepers. Disagreeing with some umpire calls is inevitable, but it's part of the game—accept the decisions and move on. If further action is needed, follow the official protest procedure outlined in the manual. According to the coach's code of conduct, coaches are expected to support the officials and contribute to creating a positive experience for everyone.

**14. DO NOT WASTE TIME BETWEEN INNINGS –**

- a. The goal is to play the game through the designated inning limit. To achieve this, coaches should minimize downtime between innings. Ensure the catcher is ready to take the field promptly, have the first batter prepared to step up to the plate, and the second batter on-deck. Avoid wasting time with cheers between half-innings. Keeping the game moving allows for more playing time for the girls.

**15. THE COACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EQUIPMENT –**

- a. At the beginning of the season, each coach receives an equipment bag containing the catcher's protective gear and a supply of softballs. Coaches are responsible for maintaining the equipment in good condition and ensuring they always have the necessary safety gear, including face masks and chinstraps. If any equipment is damaged, does not fit, or becomes unusable, it is the coach's responsibility to contact Pelican Park for replacements. Equipment checks should be conducted before each game to prevent delays. Game starts should never be held up due to missing equipment. All equipment bags must be returned to the Park office or staff immediately after your final game of the season.

**16. EQUIPMENT RULES-**

- a. will be used during games and practices:
- b. **Facemasks will be required on batting helmets for ages 5 through 12 while batting, running and on-deck.**

- c. On deck batting is not allowed for players ages 8 and under.
- d. Ages 13-15 may wear a face mask but not required.
- e. Fielders' masks must be worn by all pitchers and defensive infield players in all age groups.
- f. Metal cleats are prohibited.

#### **17. BALL SIZES:**

- a. 5 & 6 yr old leagues – 11" safety ball
- b. 7/8 yr old league – 11" .47 core ball
- c. 9/10 yr old league – 11" .47 core ball
- d. 11/12 yr old league – 12" .47 core ball
- e. 13-15 yr old league – 12" .47 core ball

#### **18. GAME BUCKETS –**

- a. Each bucket (Will be at scorer's table on game days) contains game balls, score sheets, pencils, band aids, age specific rules, incident reports, and a pool player list.

#### **19. UNIFORMS**

- a. Coaches Uniforms –
  - i. Coaches Shirts (3 coaches per team)
  - ii. Coaches Badges – each coach will be mandated to take
- b. Team Uniforms –
  - i. Team uniforms, including shirts, socks, and visors, will be issued before the season begins. Coaches may distribute the uniforms during preseason practices as soon as they receive them—the earlier, the better. Uniforms should be assigned based on size rather than preferred numbers. Softball pants/shorts, belts, and fielder's masks are not provided. If a uniform is too small (not due to personal preference), the coach should contact Pelican Park staff to explore possible solutions. If no suitable replacement is available, the player may wear a plain jersey or t-shirt, preferably matching or similar in color to the team uniform shirt.

#### **20. PRACTICE**

- a. Practice Schedules-
  - i. All practices are scheduled on the day of the team formation.
  - ii. Pre-season practices usually begin the week after team formation.
  - iii. There will be two practices per week pre-season; and then 1 practice per week during the season once the games start.
    - 1. An alternative date may be scheduled upon availability if a regularly scheduled practice was cancelled due to park or field closure (weather, etc.).
  - iv. Post season practices to prepare for tournament and/or championship games must be requested and will depend upon field availability.
  - v. Unscheduled practices may take place on an available Silver field, but note these fields are first-come/first-serve.
- b. Any requests for additional scheduled practices cannot be honored.

- c. Once practices are assigned any conflicts with the day or time of your practice schedule should be addressed to the Recreation Supervisor.
- d. For all practices at the park-
  - i. The team, as well as coaches, are covered under secondary medical insurance.
  - ii. We discourage teams from practicing outside of the Park because it makes the coaches personally liable for themselves as well as the team.
  - iii. Encourage all parents to call the Pelican Park Sports Hotline for field conditions – 626-1444 before coming to the Park.
- e. Practice Time –
  - i. Each team is given a 1 hour practice time slot.
  - ii. Please have your team off the field at the end of your on-field 1hr practice time to allow the next scheduled team on the field for their practice.
  - iii. After the 1 hour scheduled on-field practice time, your team may elect to utilize the batting cage (near 3<sup>rd</sup> base side) for ½ hr.
  - iv. For safety reasons, only one team is assigned to a practice field at a time.
    - 1. However, organized scrimmages between teams utilizing their scheduled practice times are allowed.
- f. Practice Field –
  - i. Fields are not chalked for practice and bases may or may not be at the proper distance.
  - ii. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE COACHES TO MOVE BASES.
  - iii. If you come out for an unscheduled practice, you MAY NOT practice on a field that has been prepped for a game.
    - 1. Park crew or facility staff will ask you to move.

## 21. PRE-GAME PRACTICE

- a. On-field Practice –
  - i. Not allowed within the infield in order to preserve the condition and baseline marking of the field.
  - ii. Limit pre-game warm up to the half of the outfield closest to your bench.
  - iii. The opening team on defense may take the field 5 minutes before gametime for pitching and fielding warm-up.
- b. Pre-Game Batting Cage Usage-
  - i. Since sometimes there will be 6 teams playing on three fields and there are only 3 batting cages, the home team may utilize the batting cage on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field as part of their warm-up.
    - 1. This will even out over the season given each team has the same amount of home games.
  - ii. The visiting team may only use the batting cage near them (1<sup>st</sup> base side) if there are no games or the home team on the adjacent field is not utilizing it for their warm-up.

## **22. GAME SCHEDULES –**

- a. When game schedules are complete the park will furnish copies for all parents on your team.
- b. Schedules will be on Pelican Park letterhead with the sports hotline listed on the bottom of the schedule.
- c. The schedules will also be posted on the Pelican Park web site: [www.pelicanpark.com](http://www.pelicanpark.com).
- d. Encourage all parents to call the Pelican Park Sports Hotline for field conditions 985– 626-1444 before coming to the Park.
- e. Each team will be scheduled to play the maximum number of games allowable during the period of the regular season (Ages 7 and above 12 games).
- f. Pelican Park is responsible for all schedules.

## **23. POST SEASON**

- a. Tournaments - Age groups 7 and up will play a single elimination tournament at the end of the regular season. T-Ball 5- & 6-year-old play an eight-game season with no season ending tournament. They practice before a game and if space is available, once during the week.
- b. Tie breakers for post season tournament play are determined by:
  - c. Head-to-head record
  - d. Flip a coin by staff, ideally with affected coaches & AGD present if possible. The flip of the coin will be videoed for validation.

## **24. AWARDS –**

- a. The players will receive the following awards:
  - i. Participation awards for ages 5- & 6-year-old
  - ii. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place season awards for ages 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, and 13-15
  - iii. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place tournament awards for 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, and 13-15

## **25. GAME FIELD –**

- a. Park crew will prep the fields and set the bases for the first game.
- b. If a change in base distance is needed, park crew is responsible for making the base change. Fields are not re-chalked for each game throughout the day.
- c. On a busy Saturday, fields may need re-raking; a rake is kept at each field so that coaches can rake the field before a game if so desired.
- d. There are 2-3 Park facility staff members scheduled per shift.
- e. The Park facility staff monitors both gyms, as well as activities on the fields.
- f. One of the Park facility staff always carries a cell phone.
  - i. Please call them at 985-966-6645 if there is a problem on the field.
  - ii. They can also be identified by their blue polo shirt that is monogrammed with the park logo and “Pelican Park Staff”.

## **26. DEFENSIVE COACHING –**

- a. Only the 7/8's can have coaches in the field, positioned past the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> baseperson, and in foul territory.
- b. For all other age groups any defensive coaching must be done from the dugout or dugout area.

- i. The dugout coach may not exceed 3-5' away from the opening of the dugout.

**27. WET FIELD CONDITIONS- PRACTICE OR GAME CANCELLATION –**

- a. During the week a Recreation Supervisor will determine whether the fields are playable.
- b. On the weekend it is the Manager-on-Call's responsibility to determine field playability.
- c. Every effort is made to have fields playable even when wet.
- d. Any game that is cancelled prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning will be replayed as a new game.
- e. Every attempt is made to make up rained out games.
- f. These games may be played on days that are not normally used if we incur many rainouts.
- g. Pelican Park will distribute make-up schedules to the coach a minimum of 48 hours prior to the game and post on the website

**28. SPORTS HOTLINE –**

- a. The hotline is updated at 3 PM Monday through Friday, 7 AM on Saturday and 10 AM on Sunday.
- b. It is also updated throughout the day, *as needed depending upon weather conditions*.
  - i. The hotline phone number is 985-626-1444.
  - ii. Please remind parents to call the hotline for field conditions.
  - iii. Information regarding field conditions is not provided through the Park's office.

**29. FORFEITS –**

- a. Should there be a game forfeit, it is expected that a practice game be played.
- b. If both teams forfeit a game, a loss will be given to both teams.
- c. The girls and parents who showed up for a game are entitled to play a game, even if this means splitting one team to get an even number on both sides and playing a short- sided game.
  - i. This is still a learning opportunity for the girls and should not be lost.
  - ii. Note that the scheduled umpire will most likely not call the game.
    - 1. At this point, solicit a parent or one of the coaches to be the umpire.

**30. PLAYING TIME**

- a. Does not apply in the 5/6-year-old league, all players play and bat each inning in that league.
- b. The following rules are the restrictions for playing times ages 7-15
  - i. No player will sit out defensively for more than 1 inning per game until everyone on the roster has sat out at least one inning.
  - ii. Players must play at a minimum of half the game.
    - 1. Any exceptions must be approved by Pelican Park staff.
  - iii. In all age groups, free substitution of defensive positions for on-field players is allowed and batting of the entire lineup will be followed.
  - iv. If a player is injured or sick and leaves the game, the player's batting slot is deleted.

1. If the player leaves the game for any other reason, the team must take an out for each time that batting turn comes up.
- v. All players present at the game must be in the batting lineup and remain in the batting lineup for the entire game.
- vi. If a player does not take her turn at bat, the player is out of the game.
- vii. Players can't play defense only.
- viii. Any player arriving after the start of the game must be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
- ix. A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).

**c. 7-8 Y/O AND 9-10 Y/O LEAGUES:**

- i. Each player must play an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- ii. The catcher position is considered an infield position.

**31. POOL PLAYER RULE –**

- a. Teams may begin a game with six players; fewer than six players are considered a forfeit. A team must have 6 players from his/her own team before adding pool players. A team with 6 or 7 players may add 3 or 4 pool players to round out their squad to 9 (11/12 & 13/15 leagues) or 10 (7/8 & 9/10 leagues) players, using the following guidelines:
- b. A pool player must be a registered player from the same age group and same league. Under no circumstances is it permissible for an unregistered player, or a player from another age group to be a pool player.
- c. A coach may take only as many pool players as necessary to make 9 or 10 players depending on the number of fielders allowed in that age group. For example, if a 9/10 team had only six players, the coach may take four pool players.
- d. Pool players must be on the list of approved pool players (5<sup>th</sup> round draft picks or below). Games played with approved pool players do count in the standing. Coach's choice whether to use pool players. **Players that do not evaluate may not be pool players.**
- e. The pool player must wear her own team jersey, bat last in the line-up, and play in the outfield only.
- f. A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).

**32. UMPIRES**

- a. The following umpiring plan will be implemented throughout Pelican Park:
  - i. T-Ball and 6-year-old – no umpire
  - ii. All other ages – 1 umpire.
    1. If an umpire does not show up for a game call the facility staff employee at **985-966-6645**.
    2. Tell them your age group and field so that they can call the umpire scheduler.
    3. Facility staff will come to the field to tell you the umpire's status.
    4. If an umpire is a no-show, contact Pelican Park staff.

### **33. SCOREKEEPERS**

- a. The “HOME” team will be responsible to appoint a team parent to keep score in the Official score book.
  - i. The home team coach will be responsible for returning the completed score book to the game bucket located at each field.
- b. If a parent wishes to be trained as a score keeper, they can contact Pelican, and a training session will be scheduled.
- c. It is encouraged to have the scoreboard operator from the visiting team sit with the designee recording within the scorebook so they can ensure the score is correct and playing time is correct.
- d. Coaches for the “AWAY” team will be responsible to appoint a team parent to operate the scoreboard.
- e. Score is not kept for T-Ball.

### **34. GAME PROTEST**

- a. The following process will be used to address protests in game situations:
  - i. Notify umpire and state intent of protest regarding point in question.
    - 1. Judgment calls cannot be protested.
      - a. All details must be noted in the score book including the time, both coaches’ signatures, and the officials must sign the score book, except if they refuse.
      - b. The game will continue after the protest has been noted.
- b. Provide the Pelican Park staff with a written description of the incident within 24 hours from the start of the game.
- c. All protests are to be brought to the Staff/Recreation Supervisor for ruling. A ruling will be made within 72 hours if possible.

### **35. TRASH PICK-UP –**

- a. Please remind the players to pick up their trash in the dugout after their game. The less trash to pick up the more time the park crew can spend on fields.

### **36. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- a. This is a recreational play and arguing with the umpires is not tolerated.
  - i. Violators of this policy will be dealt with in a serious manner and depending on the situation it may result in their immediate removal as a coach and could eliminate them from future coaching considerations.
  - ii. Coaches serve at the pleasure of the Park and can be removed with or without cause by the Park.
- b. Disciplinary action regarding any infraction will be handled in the following manner:
  - i. Any misconduct by a coach, spectator or player is to be reported to Pelican staff.
  - ii. Recreation Division Staff will determine whether or not infraction can be resolved or if it must escalate to Pelican Park’s disciplinary committee.

- c. Any coach ejected from a game by the umpire must leave the field/complex immediately.
  - i. Ejected coaches will serve a one game suspension or will be banned from coaching depending upon the circumstances may be referred to the disciplinary committee.
  - ii. Ejected coaches will also need to complete a sportsmanship certification and must submit their certificate before they can return as head coach of the team.

### **37. PICTURES –**

- a. Pelican Park contracts an annual bid for a photographer to take team and individual photographs.
- b. The photographer will arrange the time for your team to have their pictures taken.
  - i. If you are unable to make the scheduled shoot, please make arrangements with the photographer to reschedule the photo shoot.

### **38. END OF SEASON PELICAN PARK ALL-STAR GAME SELECTION PROCEDURE**

- a. Towards the end of the season, parents will be prompted to have their players submit to their coach 3-4 players from their team (Quantities may be adjusted based on the number of teams) that they feel would best represent their team in the All-Star Game.
- b. Coaches will tally and communicate the top contestants for each team to Pelican Park staff/All-Star Game coordinator.
- c. The head coaches with the #1 and #2 record in the REGULAR SEASON will be named All Star game head coaches (#1 will be home team).
  - i. If either coach is not available, the coach with the #3 record will be asked and so forth.
  - ii. The head coach may appoint any head coach or assistant coach within the age group league to fill out their maximum 3 member All Star Game coaching team.

**Pelican Park Youth Sports  
Official Softball Rules  
Common to All Age Groups**

1. Any rules not addressed in the handbook will follow the current USSSA softball rule book. The rule modifications to USSSA rules are below.
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct
  - a. Abusive language or insulting sign language by coaches, players, parents, or fans toward the umpires, other coaches, players, parents, or fans is not permitted.
  - b. A team may receive one warning and then the coach, player, parent, or fan will be ejected from the game area as defined by the umpire.
  - c. An individual ejected from the game shall sit out at least the next game. If the individual returns to the game area, the associated team (if applicable) will forfeit the game.
  - d. The Recreation Supervisor will review all ejections
3. "Noisemakers"
  - a. It is considered unsportsmanlike conduct to use artificial noisemakers (i.e., bells, whistles, shakers, beepers, horns, air horns, etc.) to distract or disparage a player, coach, or umpire/official/referee.
  - b. Cheering, positive and competitive team chants are allowed. However, deliberate clanging of bats or loud screams during the pitch are not allowed. A team may receive one warning and then the coach, player, parent, or fan will be ejected from the game area as determined by the umpire.
  - c. The coach is responsible for their spectators.
    - i. If it cannot be determined who in the stands is creating the problem the coach will be penalized.
  - d. An individual ejected from a game shall sit out the next game also.
    - i. If the individual returns to the game area, the associated team (if applicable) will forfeit the game.
    - ii. The behavior of anyone ejected from the game is subject to review by the Pelican Park Discipline Committee.
4. At the start of the game, the umpire will have the scorekeeper record the official start time.
5. A minimum of 6 players to start the game.
6. The umpire's judgment and calls are final and can't be argued.
7. If a base coach encounters a base runner during live action, the runner is out.
8. Chin straps on the helmets are optional.
9. Hit by pitch – If the coach pitcher hits the batter, the batter continues to bat
10. The max run per inning
  - a. Ages 7 -12:
    - i. For the first, second, and third innings there will be a six (5) run max
    - ii. For the 4<sup>th</sup> and additional innings there will be a twelve (12) run max, this will give a team an opportunity to catch up.
    - iii. If a team is ahead by 12 runs after 3 complete innings, 10 runs after 4 complete innings, or 8 runs after 5 complete innings the game will be called.
  - b. Ages 13-15:
    - i. For the first, second, and third innings there will be a six (6) run max
    - ii. For the 4<sup>th</sup> and additional innings there will be no run maximum.
    - iii. If a team is ahead by 12 runs after 3 complete innings, 10 runs after 4, or 8 after 5 complete innings the game will be called.
11. Infield Fly will be enforced for ages 9-15

12. If a game is interrupted by bad weather or any other reason, the game becomes official after 3 complete innings.
  - a. If interrupted prior to 3 innings, the game will be replayed from beginning.
13. Double First Base –
  - a. On a ball batted to the infield, the batter running to 1<sup>st</sup> base must use the outside orange base.
  - b. The defensive player will use the white base to make the play, while the runner will use orange base.
  - c. The defensive player may not block the orange base in any way.
    - i. In this case, if the batter running to 1<sup>st</sup> base on an infield hit touches the inside white base, the batter is out.
    - ii. Once the runner reaches 1<sup>st</sup> base safely, the runner can use the inside white base.
    - iii. On a ball batted to the outfield, when running past 1<sup>st</sup> base, the runner can use the inside white base.
14. Dugout coach (non-base coach)
  - a. Must be within 5 feet of opening to the dugout.
15. Sliding is not mandatory.
  - a. When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the runner is to be declared out.
  - b. Head-first sliding is not allowed, except when returning to a base already attained.
16. All outfielders should be standing on the grass playing their position before the release of the pitch.

## **5/6-YEAR-OLD T-BALL OFFICIAL RULES**

1. 11" Dixie 5 safety softballs will be used.
2. Players must use an approved t-ball bat.
3. The games are scheduled for 1 and ½ hours apart to allow the 1<sup>st</sup> ½ hour to be used for practice.
4. Games will consist of 5 innings or a time limit of one hour, whichever comes first.
5. All innings will be completed once they start.
6. All players play each inning, both offensively and defensively.
7. All infield positions will be played correctly except for no catcher.
  - a. An adult will stand behind the batter in the catcher position.
8. The outfield will consist of all other players.
9. All players will bat off the tee each inning.
10. No outs will be registered or acknowledged
11. Base runners may advance 1 base per batter.
12. Base paths are approximately 35 feet.
13. Positions will be rotated between the players.
14. In preparation for the next season:
  - a. During the last 3 games of the season with both coaches in agreement, allow the batter 3 pitches. If the batter does not hit the ball after 3 pitches, the batter hits off the tee.

## **7-8 AGE GROUP OFFICIAL RULES**

1. 11".47 core softballs will be used
2. Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - a. Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼"
  - b. Bat length may not exceed 34 inches
  - c. Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces
3. Games will consist of 5 innings or a time limit of 1 hour and 20 minutes, whichever comes first.
  - a. Three (3) outs or five (5) runs ends the inning except the 5<sup>th</sup> inning which is open and ends with each team making three (3) outs.
4. No new inning will start after 1 hour and 15 minutes
5. Pitching Distance – 8' radius circle at 40'.
6. There will be a 20' arc from the 1<sup>st</sup> base line to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line
7. A limit of five (5) pitches will be allowed for each batter, after which the batter is out if they do not put the ball in play. If the batter fouls the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, additional pitches will be thrown until the ball is hit fair or the batter is out.
8. No walks.
9. If a hit ball strikes the pitcher/coach, it is a dead ball – no pitch. The pitcher/coach should exit the field away from the play of the ball once the ball has been hit.
  - a. If in the judgment of the umpire the pitcher/coach interferes with the play of the ball, the runner is out.
10. The pitcher must have one foot in the dirt circle when playing the defensive position.
11. A player may only play the pitcher position for 3 innings per game.
12. Play stops when a player has control of the ball in front of the lead runner, or the pitcher/player has control of the ball in the circle and time is called.
13. All baserunners must stop at the base the umpire rules they are entitled to.
  - a. Hash marks shall be drawn halfway between all bases to help the umpire determine which base the runner is entitled to.
14. Defensive coaches must stand in foul territory and behind the offensive coaching box area.
15. One base on an overthrow if the ball goes out of the field of play, i.e., over the fence, or in the dugout.
16. Coach/Parent behind home plate – A coach or parent can stand near the backstop to retrieve wild pitches to help speed up the game. The coach/parent is allowed near the backstop when their team is on defense and must refrain from coaching while it is this position.
17. All players must play in an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. The catcher position is considered an infield position.

## **Softball rules for the 9-10 age group**

1. Pitching distance is 35 feet
2. 11".47 core softballs will be used
3. Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - a. Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼"
  - b. Bat length may not exceed 34 inches
  - c. Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces
4. Games will consist of 5 innings or a time limit of 1 hour and 20 minutes, whichever comes first.
  - a. Three (3) outs or five (5) runs ends the inning except the 5<sup>th</sup> inning which is open and ends with each team making three (3) outs.
5. No new inning will start after 1 hour and 15 minutes
6. All players must play in an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
  - a. The catcher position is considered an infield position.
7. An offensive coach will come in to pitch to the batter after four (4) balls have been thrown by one (1) player pitcher.
  - a. The batter will resume the same strike count when the coach pitcher comes in.
  - b. A hit batter does not count as a walk.
  - c. No walks, stealing, or bunting when the coach is pitching.
  - d. The coach pitcher will be allowed one pitch to the batter.
  - e. If the batter fouls off the last pitch, additional pitches will be given until the ball is put in play, or the batter does not swing and will be out.
  - f. The coach pitcher can finish the strike count.
    - i. Strikes called at umpire's discretion.
8. No third drop strike, no hesitation rule.
9. Base runners are allowed to steal one base per **\*batter** once the ball crosses home plate.
  - a. Once a team is up by five (5) runs they will no longer be allowed to steal home.
10. If a batter shows a bunt, she must bunt or pull back.
  - a. She cannot swing away.
11. Teams will be allowed two (2) illegal pitch warnings per game
12. Player pitchers must wear a DEFENSIVE MASK.
13. Defensive players can call time once the ball is controlled in the infield.
  - a. If the base runner has not passed the halfway point when time is called by a defensive player inside the pitching circle, she must return to the previous base.
14. Batter / Runner Regulations
  - a. Batter / Runner must wear helmet with a face mask
  - b. No metal cleats are allowed
  - c. Players cannot lead or steal prior to the pitch. The ball must pass the plate before the runner can attempt to steal the next base.
  - d. The batter may be called out should they be found using an unapproved bat
15. Pitching Regulations
  - a. The pitching limit is 2 innings per game.
    - i. Pitching any part of an inning is considered an inning.
  - b. Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's

plate. The hands must be apart. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without possession of the ball, and the pitcher may not simulate pitching with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate. B. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, with the hands separated

- c. The pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
  - i. NOTE: Before the pitch starts, the pitcher may remove them self from the pitching position by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet (either foot may be removed first) or by requesting time.
- d. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate or be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground. The pitcher may leap from the pitcher's plate, land with the non-pivot foot and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter. The pivot foot may follow through with the pitcher's continuous motion.
  - i. NOTE 1: It is not a step if the pitcher slides their pivot foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
  - ii. NOTE 2: The pitcher's push off to drag or leap must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate. Once you have lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.
  - iii. NOTE 3: All movements of the pitching arm must be continuous as the pitcher steps, pushes or leaps from the pitcher's plate.
- e. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball while in the pitching position to prevent the batter from striking it
- f. The starting pitcher is allowed three warmup pitches to start the game.
  - i. No warmup pitches in consecutive innings are allowed.
  - ii. A new pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches.
- g. The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken her position or is off balance because of the previous pitch.

#### 16. Catcher Regulations

- a. The Catcher must wear a Catchers helmet with chest protector.
- b. Shin guards are required in fast pitch.
- c. The catcher must be positioned in the Catchers box until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catchers' box

## **Softball rules for the 11/12**

### **1. Game Regulations**

- a. 12" .47 core softballs will be used.
- b. Pitching distance is 40 feet
- c. Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - i. Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼"
  - ii. Bat length may not exceed 34 inches
  - iii. Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces
- d. A game will consist of six (6) innings or 1 hour/20 minutes. Five (5) runs per inning except in the 6th inning which is open
- e. Three (3) outs or five (5) runs ends the inning except the 6<sup>th</sup> inning which is open and ends with each team making three (3) outs.

### **2. Play stoppage:**

- a. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "TIME" which is only done when the ball is returned to the pitching circle and all runners are on bases. At that moment, all runners must stay on their bases.
- b. If a runner is in between bases when a defensive player has the ball in the pitching circle, "TIME" will not be called. In this instance, the runner must either immediately return to the previous base, or she must attempt to advance (she cannot just hover in between bases). In either case, the defensive team has the choice to attempt a play on the runner.
- c. If the defensive team does not choose to attempt a play on the runner, the runner can advance but must stop at the next base.

### **3. Batter / Runner Regulations**

- a. Batter / Runner must wear helmet with a face mask
- b. No metal cleats are allowed.
- c. Stealing is allowed and the runner can leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
  - i. A runner who leaves the base early as determined by the official will be called out and the pitch will be declared a "no pitch".
  - ii. No leads.
- d. Batters can show bunt and then swing away or pull back
- e. No headfirst sliding unless diving back to a bag
- f. If a batter in the batter's box gets hit by a pitched ball, it is a Hit by Pitch. The batter will advance to the next base.
- g. The batter can foul the ball unlimited times without penalty of an out.
- h. The batter may be called out should they be found using a bat on the Banned bat list (list is in the back of the handbook)
- i. Drop third strike rule is in effect, however if the batter walks away from the plate toward the dugout she forfeits her right to run to first base
- j. Hesitation rule is in effect.

### **4. Pitching Regulations**

- a. The pitching limit is 2 innings per game for ages 11-12
  - i. Pitching any part of an inning is considered an inning.
- b. Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The hands must be apart. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the

pitcher's plate without possession of the ball, and the pitcher may not simulate pitching with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate. B. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, with the hands separated

- c. The pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
  - i. NOTE: Before the pitch starts, the pitcher may remove them self from the pitching position by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet (either foot may be removed first) or by requesting time.
- d. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate or be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground. The pitcher may leap from the pitcher's plate, land with the non-pivot foot and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter. The pivot foot may follow through with the pitcher's continuous motion.
  - i. NOTE 1: It is not a step if the pitcher slides their pivot foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
  - ii. NOTE 2: The pitcher's push off to drag or leap must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate. Once you have lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.
  - iii. NOTE 3: All movements of the pitching arm must be continuous as the pitcher steps, pushes or leaps from the pitcher's plate.
- e. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball while in the pitching position to prevent the batter from striking it
- f. The starting pitcher is allowed three warmup pitches to start the game.
  - i. No warmup pitches in consecutive innings are allowed.
  - ii. A new pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches.
- g. The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken her position or is off balance because of the previous pitch.
- h. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball while in the pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it
- i. The starting pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches to start the game. No warmup pitches in consecutive innings are allowed. A new pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches.
- j. The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken her position or is off balance because of the previous pitch.
- k. The ball count on the player will be 4 balls. Once a batter gets to 4 balls, then she will get a walk.

##### 5. Catcher Regulations

- a. The Catcher must wear a Catchers helmet with chest protector.
- b. Shin guards are required in fast pitch.
- c. The catcher must be positioned in the Catchers box until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catchers' box