

# **2021 WEST MICHIGAN AMATEUR SPORTS ASSOCIATION PONYTAIL DIVISION**

**UPDATED: 02/01/21**

*The numbers utilized in this rule's supplement are for reference only. Current USA Softball JO 10-under slow pitch rules shall apply unless modified herein.*

*This is an Eight and under – Machine Pitch League*

## **1) PLAYERS**

- a) Team must have a minimum of 8 players present in order play a scheduled game.
  - i) Players may be borrowed from other teams within the league to make up roster shortage.
  - ii) No player may be borrowed if she is already scheduled to participate in another game at that same time.
- b) All team rosters will be submitted to the West MI ASA, on the prescribed form prior to opening day. If you do not have a roster on file you do not have an eligible team for participation and your game may be ruled a forfeit on appeal. Players may be added to rosters by submitting a revised roster to West MI ASA, prior to the player's participation. No lower division roster changes will be accepted after June 1<sup>st</sup>. These rosters will also be posted on the website and will be utilized to determine All-Star eligibility.
- c) All players present must participate in the game (obvious injury exclusions apply. Inform Umpire prior to start of game.)
- d) Roster batting is required.
  - i) Coaches will provide each other with a batter lineup card prior to the start of the game.
  - ii) The home team is responsible for the official scorebook.
  - iii) If a team starts with 8 players, no out is to be recorded for the missing 9<sup>th</sup> player as prescribed in USA SOFTBALL rules.

## **2) PLAYER REPRESENTATION**

- a) All players present for game may participate defensively however there can be no more than 6 players on the infield when the ball is pitched or placed on the Tee. Those players designated as outfielders must begin each play at least one step back onto the outfield grass. The Catcher is an infielder.
- b) Defensive coaches may also be positioned anywhere on the field however they may not be on the infield.
  - i) The player normally assigned the position of pitcher shall play in a position on a line that extends three feet either side of the pitcher's rubber at the 40-foot position. If the field does not have a 40-foot rubber but instead has a 35-foot rubber. A line will be drawn at the 40-foot mark and used for this purpose. She may not move from that position until the ball has been pitched. This is a safety rule and not negotiable. Umpire should not allow the ball to be pitched until this is complied with.
  - ii) No infielder may be positioned closer than 40 feet from home plate. (This distance is umpire judgment)

## **3) LATE ARRIVALS**

- a) Players arriving late may be added at the end of the batting order and will be permitted to fully participate in the game.

## **4) UNIFORMS/EQUIPMENT** - Players will wear full uniforms as determined by individual league and complete uniform will be worn during the game. Shorts are permitted.

- a) This league is not USA SOFTBALL therefore bats need only be checked for safety purposes and not whether they meet current USA SOFTBALL bat requirements.
- b) All infielders will wear a facemask
- c) The 11 inch, optic yellow, softball will be used in all games. (GWSP-47) Must be provided by the home team indicated on the schedule for each game. A second playable game ball will be provided by the visiting team.

## **5) REGULATION GAME**

- a) 7 Innings or 1 hour 20 minutes. Inning in progress at the end of the time limit is the final inning. The USA Softball Run Ahead Rule shall apply at this time.
- b) Game may end in a tie.
- c) Teams may score a maximum of five runs per inning. Once the fifth run has scored, the teams at bat ~~will be~~ **is** complete. The last inning is open however no team may hold a lead greater than the run ahead rule. Should

this rule result in the visiting team not being permitted to come to bat in the top of the final inning, they will not lose their "at-bat" should the home team take the lead. Each team shall be permitted their "three outs" in that final inning, unless the home team is in the lead.

**6) PITCHING**

- a) The home team will provide a non-electric pitching machine, positioned at the 35-foot rubber.
- b) Offensive coaches will have the option (per batter) to use the machine or to pitch manually
  - i) Machine Pitch - Offensive coach will operate the pitching machine for his/her own batters and shall in no way hinder the pitcher or other defensive player from fielding the ball. Effect: Ball is dead; no pitch declared; runners return to last base occupied; batter bats again.
  - ii) Coach Pitch – Coach may deliver a ball to the batter from a distance no closer than 27 feet.
  - iii) If ball hits machine, ball is still a fair ball, the machine shall be considered part of the field.
    - (1) If the ball becomes trapped under the machine, the umpire will declare a dead ball. Dead ball rules will apply.
- c) The offensive coach will remain next to the pitching machine after the ball has been put in play.
- d) A hash marked line shall be extended for three feet each side of the 43 foot pitchers rubber. This is where the pitchers helper will be positioned.

**7) THE AT BAT**

- a) Each batter will receive 5 pitches. She either puts the ball in play or strikes out.
  - (1) Foul ball on the third strike does not constitute an out and batter will receive another pitch.
- b) A thrown ball fielded by the offensive coach will be ruled dead and all runners will return to the last base occupied. If the batter runner has not yet reached 1<sup>st</sup> base, she will bat again.
- c) A batted ball fielded by the offensive coach. Effect: Ball is dead; no pitch declared; runners return to last base occupied; batter bats again.
- d) A batted ball striking the offensive coach before an infielder has an opportunity to field it shall be called dead and the batter shall be required to bat again.
  - i) Runners will return to the base occupied when the batter came to bat.
  - ii) A batted ball that strikes a defensive coach on the field shall be ruled dead and all runners shall be awarded one additional base from the last base touched.
  - iii) A thrown ball that strikes a defensive coach on the field shall be considered live.
    - (i) If the interference is ruled intentional, as in the defensive coach picked up the ball to hand it to a player, all runners will be awarded two additional bases from the last base touched.

**8) OVERTHROW**

- a) *Overthrow: A thrown ball that continues past its intended target. i.e.: a ball thrown to first or third that goes past the first/third baseman in into foul territory but is not in dead ball territory. A ball thrown to second base that continues into the outfield.*
  - i) *(Balls that enter dead ball territory will follow dead ball rules)*
- b) *Overthrow runner position is determined by their location at the time the ball misses its intended target.*
  - i) *When a thrown ball continues past the intended target.*
    - (1) *Third baseman fields the ball and throws to first. Overthrow is in effect when the ball misses the "intended target" i.e.; first baseman.)*
- c) *As long as the ball stays in live ball territory, the overthrow rule is in effect. Ball that enters dead ball territory will be called dead and dead ball rules will apply.*
- d) *The runner's eligibility to advance is based upon their position at the time the overthrow occurs.*
  - i) *A runner standing on base and not in motion may not start running again. A runner currently in motion may continue on to the next base as well as one more base, however with jeopardy to be put out.*
  - ii) *Batter/runner headed to first, but has not reached first, at the time of the overthrow may continue to second but may not continue to third.*
  - iii) *A runner standing on first at the time of overthrow may not start running again, they are NOT currently in motion and may not start up again.*
  - iv) *Runner advancement can be stopped based upon the runner ahead of them.*

- (1) *Runner on second is standing on second at the time of the overthrow. This runner may not advance as this base is considered occupied.*
  - (2) *Batter/runner at the time of overthrow may not continue to second as this base is occupied. Umpire should declare dead ball (due to runners not being able to advance) so play ceases and next batter can come up.*
  - e) *When overthrow rule goes into effect: the ability of a runner to continue to take an extra base is determined by their position at the time the ball became an overthrow (the time is missed its intended target). i.e.: a runner on her way to first, that has not yet reached first, may continue to second, but no further. A runner standing on base, is not considered in motion and is determined to have already reached their destination, will not be allowed to start running again.*
    - i) *This also means that a runner could possibly round first and be headed to second when the overthrow occurs, this would allow the runner to continue, at jeopardy, towards third. Provided that an overthrow at another base has not already occurred. (example, batter hits ball to outfield, she rounds first and heads to second. Ball gets thrown to first and is overthrown. Runner is on her way to second at the time of overthrow and therefor is allowed to continue to one more base (third) while at jeopardy.) This is because the runner's position at the time of overthrow was enroute to second. They may continue, at jeopardy, to one additional base, thus allowing the runner to continue to third, at jeopardy.*
  - f) *Action: On an overthrow, the umpire will indicate a "pending dead-ball" / "delayed dead ball" with the appropriate signal (hands half raised even with shoulders, palms facing forward). Runners, currently in motion, will be allowed, while in jeopardy, to continue to one more base, no further. Umpires should announce "OVERTHROW" when the gesture is given so that all coaches are aware the rule is in effect. In the event that an overthrow happens when runners are standing firmly on base and cannot continue, the umpire will declare dead ball and all play will cease. (see example above)*
    - i) *Once the overthrow is declared, this is a delayed dead ball.*
- 9) INTENTIONAL WALK** - The intentional walk may not be used.
- 10) INFIELD FLY RULE** - is not in effect in this league.
- 11) CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT**
- a) Catcher will wear chest protector, mask, and catcher's helmet.
  - b) Shin guards are optional. (Coaches please be aware that one of the biggest reasons we have delays in the game is because catchers are not ready. If your child insists on wearing full catcher's equipment, she needs to be getting ready quicker.)
- 12) THROWN BAT**
- a) On a thrown bat call, a warning will be given to that player's team bench and the next batter on that team to throw a bat will be called out. It shall be noted in the official book when a warning is given to the bench. If the batter throws the bat on a batted ball and is called out, runners may advance with jeopardy. (EXAMPLE) *Batter throws bat when ball is hit to the infield on a ground ball. There are runners on first and second. Umpire will call "Batter Out" and the force on the runners is eliminated.* (A thrown bat is a bat that leaves the batters hands on a batted ball or missed swing and travels in such a trajectory that it endangers any other player on the field. Any bat released by the batter and striking the catcher or home plate umpire will be an automatic out with no warning given. A bat deliberately thrown to the ground by the batter who is running toward 1st base is not a thrown bat, unless it meets the criteria outlined in this section.)
- 13) RUN AHEAD RULE**
- a) In an effort to prevent a runaway game, no team shall be allowed to score more than 5 runs per inning.
  - b) The last inning is open however no team shall be allowed to increase their lead by more than the total number of runs allowed under the "Run Ahead" rule.
    - i) USA SOFTBALL Run Ahead rule will apply. 15 after 3, 12 after 4 and 8 after 5 innings of play.
    - ii) Should the trailing team come to bat in the final inning and catch up or go ahead, the original lead team will be allowed to return and complete their final at bat. Please note this could mean the visiting team does not come to bat at the top of the final inning because their lead exceeds the run-ahead limit. Should they be caught and passed. They would then take their "at bats".) An at bat in the final inning means your team has been allowed to record its three outs. If the home team is ahead, this does not apply.

**14) CALLING TIME OUT / DEAD BALL**

- a) In accordance with the USA SOFTBALL rules, only the umpire can call time out. To clarify the time out ruling on when a ball becomes dead: If in the opinion of the umpire, all attempts to advance by the base runners have ended, he/she may call time out. This can occur even when a runner is between bases provided that it appears their position is only intended to draw the throw and not an attempt to advance to the next base.

**15) RAIN OUT** - May only be called by the Chief Umpire, League Representative or Field Manager. Rainouts will be made known at least one hour before the scheduled start of the game. If not notified, teams are expected to show up or face forfeiture.

- a) Games will be stopped immediately if lightening is seen or thunder is heard from the field. In the event the game is being played at a complex of multiple fields, any game being canceled because of dangerous weather conditions shall be considered grounds to stop all games. There will be a 20-minute period where we wait to see if there is more thunder or lightening before play may resume. If there is a repeat instance of thunder or lightening, the 20-minute clock is restarted. After two restarts, the game is cancelled. The game timer will also be stopped at this point and the time on the clock shall pick up where we left off.
- b) Should the National Weather Service issue a Severe Thunderstorm Warning or Tornado Warning for our area, all games in progress shall be stopped and all scheduled games during the duration of the warning shall be postponed.
- c) Game rescheduling is the responsibility of the home team. That coach should work with the opposing coach and the chief umpire to reschedule the game.

**16) BATTER-RUNNER**

- a) Face mask on batting helmet is required
- b) Stepping on home plate when hitting the ball either fair or foul. Batter will be warned. Ball is dead; batter is instructed on what she did wrong and will be given guidance on how to avoid a similar mistake in the future. A second occurrence during the same at bat will result in the batter being called out.
- c) Leaving the base too soon or not staying in contact with the base until the ball is put in play. Ball is dead; base runners will return to the last base occupied at the time of the infraction. Batter will bat again. A second occurrence while the same runner is still on base shall result in the runner in violation being called out.

**17) COURTESY RUNNER**

- i) Rule is modified to indicate that should a runner be needed to replace an existing runner, that runner shall be the last batter to have recorded an out.
- ii) The Courtesy Runner shall only be used in the event of a player being unable to continue her base running. If a player is removed from the base for any reason other than as outlined below, she must be removed from the game or be charged with an out when her next turn at-bat happens.
- iii) If the catcher for the team at bat is on base, the umpire will give the offensive coach the option of replacing her with a courtesy runner as defined above.

**18) SAFETY RULES** – Rules enacted for the safety of the players may not be waived. Many are in effect as a result of league insurance rules and league officials may not act in direct defiance of these rules.

- a) No infielder, except for the pitchers helper may be positioned closer than 43 feet from home plate until the ball is put in play.
- b) All infielders must wear a facemask.

**19) ON DECK BATTER SAFETY RULE** – If any offensive player, aside from base runners, enters the batter's box while play is in progress, umpire will call time immediately. All runners must return to the last base touched at the time the play was stopped. **No out or interference will be called.**

**20) GROUND RULES** – These are rules that specifically pertain to the playing conditions on the fields and may not alter the conduct of the game as outlined herein.

**21) PROTESTS** - Shall be filed with the WMASA SOFTBALL Director and must be done within 48 hours.

**22) EJECTIONS** - An ejection of a player or coach report must be filled out within 48 hours of the incident. USA SOFTBALL rule book has the criteria for the report. The report shall be submitted to the West MI USA SOFTBALL Director.

- a) Player or coach ejected will be notified by his/her director that he/she is also suspended from the next scheduled game as well. (Please note that if the ejection occurs during the final game of the season that coach if applicable will be suspended for the first All Star game should they be a coach there.
- b) Repeated ejections in the same season may result in the individual's expulsion from the program for the remainder of the season.

- 23) RULES CHANGES** – These rules are reviewed annually during the Executive Board meeting in January. Modifications recommended during this meeting must have a majority of the directors in support (WMUSA SOFTBALL Director is tie breaker) and will then take effect in the next year's season. Rule changes requested for the current or upcoming season must have two-thirds majority in order to be enacted immediately.

## ADDENDUM A

Umpires in the Ponytail league will be paid \$30.00 per game. Only One umpire will be assigned for each game. Please see the following partial payment classifications:

1. Game called more than 1 hour prior to scheduled start time
  - a. If Umpire is notified and does not show, no pay
  - b. If Umpire is not notified and shows up \$5.00 for gas
2. Game called at game time
  - a. Umpire should get full pay
3. Game called while game is in progress
  - a. Umpire gets full pay and there should be an effort to have the same umpires do the makeup game if it is scheduled. If they do the makeup game then they would not be paid because they had already been paid for that one.

Comment: If there is a double header scheduled and both games are cancelled, this amendment only applies to the first game and the second is considered ample notice for cancellation.