

Marcellus Optimist Youth Softball

Ponies "A" League Rules

GAME TIME LIMIT

No new inning shall start after 7:55. We would like games to end by 8:15 pm at the latest. **This is IF the game starts on time. If you do not start until 6:15, then no new inning shall start after 8:10.** A game shall last 6 innings or 2 hours. A game IS considered complete if 3 ½ or 4 innings are completed.

5 RUN PER INNING RULE/Mercy Rule

Continuous batting order will be used. Players arriving late should be added to the end of the batting order. If a player is injured while on base, she will be replaced by the last batter who is not on base at the time of injury. A half-inning will be completed after five runs are scored or three outs are made. In a half-inning if after four runs are scored a situation occurs in which more than one run would score only the fifth run will be counted. EXCEPTION: There is no run scoring limit in the top and bottom of the **sixth inning**. If after 4 complete innings, one team is up by 15 runs or more, the game is over.

PLAYING TIME & SUBSTITUTION

The field will be set with 6 infielders and 4 outfielders. Every player must play in AT LEAST 2 consecutive innings. You can start a game with 1, 2 or 3 outfielders (7, 8 or 9 total players). If you have less than 7 players, it is considered a forfeit but you may still "scrimmage".

If you know you are going to be short players, you may secure a substitute player from your own league or the league directly below you. The substitute must be a registered player for your league. If you are securing substitutes, you should not exceed 9 players for that game. Substitutes should not pitch. **All teams participating this year are going to a grade level system rather than age based.**

MAXIMUM INNINGS PER PITCHER

For 2021 we are suspending the pitch limit rule. Be mindful of your players and do not overuse them.

INFIELD FLY RULE

There is no infield fly rule. The defense must catch the ball for it to be an out.

PITCHING DISTANCE

The ball (**12 in.**) shall be pitched from a distance of **40** feet. A pitching rubber will mark the distance. The pitcher must start with one foot on the pitching rubber.

PITCHING PROCEDURES

The player will pitch to each batter.

A player removed as a pitcher may pitch again in the same game, providing she remains in the game defensively when removed from the mound. However, she may only return to the mound once per inning. Pitchers should be following ASA pitching standards and starting with one foot on the pitching rubber. If a team's pitcher is having difficulty getting the ball to the plate, the 2 coaches should conference and agree to any variation of this.

STRIKE ZONE

We will play with an extended strike zone. Umpires are expected to call strikes on a pitched ball deemed hittable (umpire's judgment) with usual effort from a batter. Batters should stay in the batter's box unless they are avoiding being hit by a pitch. We want batters offering at hittable pitches! We are not encouraging "walks".

BASE STEALING

Runners must not leave the base until the pitcher releases the ball. **On overthrown balls--if the ball is still “in play” the runner can continue running without restrictions. If the ball goes past the “dead ball line” the runner is awarded 2 bases from the base they started from.** (IE—if the catcher tries to pick the runner off of first base and the ball goes into “dead ball” territory, the runner advances to 3rd base.) It is permissible for a batter/runner, after ball four, to immediately steal second base (without hesitation) only if the catcher has not recovered the pitch by the time the batter/runner reaches first base. Runners may steal home on a passed ball. There will be NO delayed stealing.

CIRCLE VIOLATION

The circle violation will be in effect. Please explain this rule to all team members, parents, etc... When a runner is off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the 8-foot radius circle, the runner must IMMEDIATELY attempt to advance to the next base or return to the previous base. Once the runner has decided which base to move toward she must not hesitate or change direction unless a play is made on her. A fake throw as determined by the umpire IS considered an attempted play.

Basically, when the pitcher has the ball in the circle—the runner has to go back to the base or try to steal the next base. She may not stay off and “dance” around to try to bait the pitcher.

BUNTING

Bunting will be allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. For the protection of the first and third base players, there will be no instances in which a batter shows a bunt and then swings away. If this happens, the ball will be called dead, batter will be called out, and runner(s) will return to the base(s) they were on at the time of the pitch. Fake bunting and NOT hitting is allowed. (In a base stealing situation)

STANDINGS : Standings will be kept for the purpose of play-offs. Scores should be reported as soon as possible to the league coordinator &/or president.