

MILFORD HOPEDALE GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE
2021 Official Rules for Junior Division
5th & 6th Grade

This is a recreational division. An emphasis must be placed on developing and improving each player's fundamentals & skills of the game, teaching an understanding of the rules, developing teamwork and having fun. Obeying the rules, paying attention, and showing respect for teammates and coaches should be taught and required.

GENERAL:

1. Game balls shall be 12 inch in size.
2. Each team will use a maximum of (10) players in the field. All four outfielders must be in the outfield grass prior to each pitch.
3. There must be (8) players to start a game. A team having less than (8) players should borrow players from the other team so that the game can be played. All rescheduled games must be set-up within one week. Every effort must be made to avoid rescheduling.
4. There will be no substitutions allowed using players from older divisions.
5. A game must start no later than 6:00 p.m. Each game is (6) innings long. No innings will be started after 7:45 p.m.
6. Coaches cannot call a rainout or reschedule a game. Only the division representative may cancel a game.
7. During a game, there will be a maximum of (3) coaches, and the members of the team seated on the bench. All other assistants and visitors must be seated elsewhere. **This rule must be strictly enforced.**
8. Games must be stopped immediately upon any sightings of lightning.
9. Each player must play (2) complete innings unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her. A free substitution rule will be in effect.
10. Coaches should try to give players equal time in all positions consistent with the development of their abilities (e.g. Players who have trouble catching a thrown ball should not play first base until they have developed the confidence and skills to safely play there). Players should not be played where they are not comfortable.
11. Any tied games after (6) innings will utilize a tiebreaker rule. The batter that made the last out of the prior inning will start the first extra inning on second base. If more extra innings are required, then the last batter will start on third base.
12. ASA certified umpires will be used for all games. If rules are not specifically covered in this document, the rules of the Amateur Softball Association of America shall govern play.
13. If a rule interpretation cannot be agreed to during a game, a meeting should be requested with the executive board of the league. Play should resume under protest, but DO NOT delay the game under any circumstances.

PITCHING:

1. The pitcher's rubber will be placed (40) feet from the back of home plate.
2. Pitchers may use windmill or modified pitching.
3. The pitcher must start her wind-up with both feet on the pitching rubber and the first step must be forward.
4. The pitcher can only pitch (3) innings per game.

5. If a pitcher hits (2) batters in one inning she will be taken out for the rest of the inning. The pitcher can return to pitch during the game. However, if she hits (2) additional batters (or 4 total for the game) she must be taken out (from the pitchers position) for the rest of the game.

BATTING:

1. All players will be included in a continuous batting order.
2. Batting helmets, face guards, and chin straps are mandatory for the batters and base runners. Throat protectors, shin guards, chest protectors, catcher's helmet and masks are required for catchers.
3. For the safety of the players and the umpire, a batter that throws the bat will be given a warning. For a second offense, the batter will be called out.
4. Bunting is allowed. No slash hitting allowed (showing bunt, pulling back, then hitting away).
5. The infield fly rule & the dropped third strike rule will not be in effect.
6. There is a (5) run per inning rule. Once a team has scored (5) runs the inning will be terminated regardless of the number of outs. This rule does not apply to the last inning of the game.

BASERUNNING:

1. The bases will be (60) feet apart.
2. Continuing to 2nd base on a walk is not allowed.
3. Stealing is allowed upon release of the pitch. No head first slides allowed.
4. There will be a limit of 4 steals per inning. A double steal will be considered as 2 stolen bases.
5. Stealing of all bases will be allowed. Only (1) steal each is allowed from 1st to 2nd and 3rd to home in an inning. Stealing from 2nd to 3rd has no restrictions on the number, but the combined total number of steals in a given inning cannot exceed the limit of 4. Only (1) base will be allowed to be taken on each steal attempt or passed ball even if the ball is over thrown or misplayed.
6. If a team is ahead by (6) runs, stealing and bunting will not be allowed and base runners will not advance.
7. When a pitcher has the ball within an (8) feet radius around the pitchers rubber, the base runner is obligated to proceed in either direction to a base. If a player stands still or changes direction she will be called out UNLESS the pitcher makes a play for the runner.
8. A courtesy runner may be used only in the event of an injury to the runner. The courtesy runner shall be the girl who made the last out.
9. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, or a defensive player about to release a thrown ball. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three foot lane, the runner would be called out), or return to the previous base touched. Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender may be ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Coaches are expected to lead by example.
- Players should wear their complete team uniforms to all games.
- Coaches will limit their discussion with umpires during a game to rules, and must not comment on judgment calls such as balls, strikes, safes/outs.
- Coaches cannot assist/help (touch) the base runners.
- Coaches are responsible for making every reasonable effort to control parents, players, and fans.