

## **Framingham Girls Fastpitch Softball**

Junior A League - Grades 5 and 6

2021 Season - Approved May 18, 2021

### **2021 Season Highlights**

Continuing important initiative this year is to keep games moving. In the league rules, we have highlighted USA Softball rules which are designed for pace of game improvements. We have instructed the umpire board to use good judgement in enforcing these rules, but to keep them in mind if there are delays between innings or getting play started or restarted. Coaches bear most of the responsibility for keeping things moving, therefore, here are some suggestions:

- Use a courtesy runner for the catcher when there are 2 outs.
- When the catcher is not on base, at bat, or on deck, she should have all of her gear on and be ready to take the field.
- If a catcher is not ready when the offensive half inning ends, make sure a coach or other CORI'd adult assists the catcher in getting ready.
- During the offensive half inning, all players going to the field on defense in the next half inning should be told of their position before the 2<sup>nd</sup> out or well before the run limit is reached.

Roster rules for 2021 include a modified call up/over process. If a team will have fewer than 10 players and the coach is aware of this ahead of the game, players may be called up from a Junior B team so that the roster does not exceed 12 players. If call ups are not available, there are now commissioners for each league/level who must be contacted to facilitate "call overs" from another team at the same level. It is preferred that added player(s) do not pitch in the game, however, if both coaches agree, it is permitted.

There is a 4 run limit for all innings with the exception of the last inning, which is either the 6<sup>th</sup> inning or the declared last inning by the umpire due to the 1 hour 20 minute time rule. If the game cannot be completed due to darkness, weather, etc., and an inning has not ended (top and bottom), the score reverts to the previous completed inning.

4 steals are permitted per inning, 1 may be of home. No stealing when the offensive team has a 6 or greater run lead. A 2 base walk is permitted once per inning.

The infield fly is not in effect for Junior A.

Batters may not advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike: she is out.

Safety considerations: No jewelry is permitted on players participating in the game. This includes, earrings, other piercings, rings, necklaces, bracelets (including cloth). No taping of jewelry is permitted. Umpires have been instructed to remove players from the game for this. If they remove the jewelry, they may return.

\*Medical ID jewelry (bracelets or necklaces) are permitted.

Batting helmets are no longer required to have chin straps. Chin straps are permitted, but not required.

Fielding masks are required for pitchers, and we recommend use of fielding masks for all infielders. Each team will provide 1 mask for a pitcher and some number for other fielders. It is encouraged for families to provide their own masks for their players.

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## Junior A League Home Rules and Regulations

The Framingham Girls Fastpitch Softball league will abide by all rules and regulations as stated under GIRLS FAST PITCH SOFTBALL, 18 and under in the Amateur Softball (ASA) rule book.

Framingham home rules are as follows:

### Zero Tolerance Policy

Please refer to policy at [www.framinghamsoftball.org](http://www.framinghamsoftball.org)

#### 1. Age Grouping and Roster

- a. Junior A League teams will consist of 5th and 6th grade players.
  - a. Additional younger grade players may also be placed at Junior A at the discretion of the league
- b. Each Junior A League roster will consist of up to thirteen (13) players.
- c. If a team will have 10 or fewer players available for a game they may call up a player or players from any Junior B team provided the total roster for the game does not exceed 12.
  - I. It is preferred that call-ups do not pitch, however, if both coaches agree, it is permitted.
  - II. Call-ups (from JRB) are preferred over call-overs (from JRA).
  - III. If a player is called-over, they may NOT pitch.
- d. If a team plays with eight (8) players per the USA Baseball shorthanded rule, there will NOT be an automatic out recorded for the 9th place in the batting order.

#### 2. Coaches

- a. One coach, no more than three assistant coaches, and one scorekeeper are permitted per team. These are the only approved adults allowed on the field and in the bench area.
- b. Coaches and Assistants **MUST** attend initial coaches meeting to review rules prior to the season and must complete an interview, pass the CORI process, submit a signed Code of Conduct form, and must be registered by the league with USA Softball.
- c. Practice field assignments to be made by the league

#### 3. General Pre Game Rules

- a. Most week-day games will start at 6:00 PM unless the board defers the time to play under the lights.
- b. A team not fielding 8 players by 15 minutes past the declared start time shall forfeit the game.
- c. If the number of players drops below 8 players during a game, a forfeit must be taken even if an injury or a player ejection occurs.
- d. A game can be canceled if determined by the umpire that the field is unsafe for the players.
- e. Only the Umpire can call a game due to unsafe conditions once a game begins.
- f. If a league approved umpire is not present 5 minutes prior to game time, the two coaches must agree on a replacement umpire. Replacement umpire must use appropriate protective equipment.
- g. If a replacement umpire cannot be agreed upon by 10 minutes past the scheduled game time, the game must be rescheduled.
- h. Both Home and Visiting team coaches are responsible for field set up and takedown - including foul lines, bases and scoreboard. Field **MUST** be ready for play no later than 10 minutes prior to scheduled game time.
- i. Visiting team takes infield 25 minutes prior to game time for 10 minutes
- j. Home team takes infield 15 minutes prior to game time for 10 minutes
- k. Both head coaches **MUST** attend a pregame conference with the umpire no later than five (5) minutes prior to the start time of the game.
  - a. Home team coach will discuss all ground rules with the umpire and visiting team during the pre-game process. Ground rules include field rules set by the town, including items such as curfews.
- l. Umpire will review these rules as they pertain to the playing of the game.

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m. Home coaches are responsible for reporting final scores to the league (entering into the league website).

### 4. Uniforms and Helmet Rules

- a. Junior A league players must wear approved helmets with secured face masks. Fastened chin straps are not required but are permitted.
- b. For player safety, pitching masks are strongly recommended.
- c. Fielding masks for infielders and pitchers are recommended but not required. Note: The league has masks for use during games in the equipment sheds and team bags.
- d. All players must wear a league issued uniform including team uniform shirt and softball pants or shorts
- e. All League uniform shirts are required and must be tucked in.
- f. Sliding shorts or sliding pads are recommended but not mandatory.
- g. Violations will come before the Disciplinary Committee for action.
- h. All hair should be pulled back
- i. **No jewelry is permitted on any player participating in the game. If jewelry is discovered, the umpire will remove the player from the game. All applicable substitution rules will apply. Jewelry includes, but is not limited to, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and any other non-clothing item worn on the wrists, ankles, or neck. The jewelry rule is non-negotiable. Note: A player may return to the game once the jewelry is removed, provided they comply with applicable substitution rules. \*Medical ID jewelry (bracelets and necklaces for example) are permitted.**
- j. Mouth guards are highly recommended for all players.

### 5. Player Rules

- a. Each Junior A player shall play a minimum of 3 defensive innings per game.
- b. The minimum play rule should be considered early in the season because of darkness.
- c. A continuous batting order is to be used consisting of all players present at the game.
- d. Players arriving late to a game, after the game begins, **must** be added to the end of the batting order.
- e. Discretionary benching of a player is allowed by the coach
- f. If, in the judgment of an umpire or coach, an injury requires immediate medical attention, the ball is immediately called dead and the player is attended to. Placement of runners and batters is at the umpire's discretion.
- g. If an injured player or discretionary benched player in the continuous batting order is unable to play, she will be skipped in the order and the opposing team will **not** get an automatic out.

### 6. Pitching Rules

- a. Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game. There are no weekly pitching maximums.
- b. The starting pitcher only can be re-inserted once during a game at the Junior A Level.
- c. No other pitcher may be reinserted as a pitcher once removed from that position.
- d. Violation of this rule results in immediate ejection from the game of the player and an automatic out at each subsequent scheduled at bat for that player.
- e. One pitch constitutes one inning pitched.

### 7. Playing Rules

- a. A regulation game is 6 innings.
- b. 10 Field Players are allowed on defense at the Junior A level.
- c. A short outfielder or fourth outfielder may be placed in the outfield only.
  - i. Outfield players must remain on the outfield grass until the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand
- d. The time limit is 1 hour and 20 minutes and finish the inning. Then play one additional inning or half inning if the home team is ahead.
- e. If an inning is not concluded, the score will revert back to the score at the end of the last completed inning.

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- i. **NOTE:** All playoff games will be played to completion with no time limit. Every effort **must** be made to keep playoff games moving.
- f. The international tie breaker will be used if the game is tied after 6 complete innings (or the designated last inning).
- g. One inning only will be played using the tie breaker. If still tied, the game is recorded as a tie.
- h. Teams will have 1 minute between innings. Pitchers may throw no more than 5 warm up pitches within the 1 minute time frame. 1 minute starts upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the prior half inning or the end of the play in which the run limit is reached. Umpires will use discretion to enforce this rule.
- i. No protesting of a judgment call is allowed.
- j. The head coach only may ask for a clarification to the umpire related to a call when it involves an interpretation of a rule.
- k. All innings will have a 4 run limit with the exception of the final inning.
  - i. The final inning will be an unlimited run inning.
- l. There is no Run Ahead rule for FGFS. All games will be played to completion or time limit.
- m. In each inning, play does not stop when the 4th run crosses the plate ... continue until the ball is controlled by the pitcher or becomes dead. Runs scored beyond the limit will not count for that inning.
- n. A suspended game is an official game if 4 complete innings or 3 ½ innings (home team ahead) are played.
- o. Games called because of darkness or inclement weather revert to the score after the last complete inning.
- p. Any game not considered complete must resume from the point of when it was suspended. **Important note**, the home book is the official book of record.
- q. 40 foot pitching distance, a temporary pitching plate is allowed to accommodate the distance.
- r. Coaches should expedite the game as much as possible. For example, have the catcher ready for the next defensive inning or have a coach warm up a pitcher as the catcher is putting on her equipment. Also let the players know what positions they will be playing before the start of the next defensive inning.
- s. **NOTE:** A courtesy runner shall be substituted for the catcher in order to expedite the game. This courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out.
- t. Dropped Third Strike Rule does **not** apply. Once the batter gets three strikes she is out and cannot advance to first base on a dropped pitch.
- u. Infield Fly Rule does **not** apply
- v. Stealing of second, third, and home base is allowed. Runners may **not** advance on an overthrow during a steal attempt.
- w. Any team with a 6 run lead or larger may not steal.
- x. 4 steals are permitted per inning. Only 1 steal of home is permitted per inning.
- y. "Continuous walk", where a batter draws a walk and does not stop at first, advancing to second is permitted **once** per inning. This play will count as a steal.
- z. Bunting is allowed at the Junior A level.
- aa. Batters may not fake bunt and then swing away. Batter will be called out.
- bb. The umpire will suspend play at the first sign of lightning or thunder with all players instructed to leave the field. The game may resume after a period of at least 30 minutes without lightening or thunder.

### 8. Playoffs

- a. All teams qualify for the playoffs.
- b. Schedule TBD

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- c. Players not playing in a minimum of 5 games during the regular season will not be eligible for the playoffs at the coach's discretion - coaches may also exclude a player from playoff eligibility for failure to attend practice sessions and/or other behavior deemed detrimental to the team or the league.
- d. Playoff rules and schedule are subject to review and modification by the Board