

*District 6 Inter-League Softball*

2019 Playing Rules

**Junior League Division**

**COACHES ARE REQUIRED TO BRING A COPY OF THESE RULES WITH THEM TO EVERY GAME.**

The **Junior League division** shall be open to girls ages 12-14 years old based on the 2019 Little League age chart.

According to Little League regulations, girls may play on both a Major League team AND a Junior League team during the regular season. 12 year old girls who play in the Junior League shall be eligible for selection to the Junior League District Tournament team OR the 10-11-12 year old District Tournament team provided they play in 60% of scheduled Junior League regular season games. Girls may not be selected to more than one District Tournament team.

**Inter-league softball play will follow the 2019 Little League Playing Rules. All coaches are strongly urged to read and be familiar with the Little League rule book. A lack of knowledge of those rules shall not be used as an excuse and the Little League rules must be followed except where modified below.**

The district will provide a schedule of regular season games plus a playoff system. Home teams will be responsible for assigning an umpire for each game. Umpires should be made aware of Little League rules and these modifications. Umpires should understand that they work at the discretion of our leagues and shall enforce these rules as written.

**PLEASE REPORT GAME RESULTS TO [District6DA@NJD6LL.org](mailto:District6DA@NJD6LL.org) after every game.**

All teams will participate in post-season playoffs provided they have played a minimum 10 regular season games in the District 6 inter-league schedule. Teams will be seeded into two brackets – Championship and Consolation – according to the number of regular season wins. Some teams may receive a first round bye as determined by the total number of teams. The District will assign umpires for all playoff games.

**Playoffs will occur on Thursday, June 6 through Sunday, June 9. Once distributed, the playoff schedule will not be deviated from for any reason other than weather, as decided by the District Administrator or his designee.**

**GAME PRELIMINARIES**

To begin a game, teams must have at least 8 players present. Teams are encouraged to do everything they can to play games as scheduled, including calling up a player from the Major division to fill-in.

If one team cannot meet the 8-player minimum, a player(s) may be borrowed from the other team and the umpire should remain to officiate a practice game.

Teams should arrive early for game play and each team will be given equal time for on-field warm-up prior to the game.

Only coaches who have been certified by their leagues Board of Directors shall be permitted in the dugout or on the field before or during the game. No more than four coaches per team will be allowed in the dugout. The

team's scorebook should be kept in the dugout by one of the four coaches. Line-ups provided to the opposing team shall include player's names and uniform numbers.

A 12-inch Little League approved softball shall be used.

All players present at the start of the game must play at least two innings in the field and bat once.

## **SCORING AND CONCLUSION OF THE GAME**

Games will be six innings or two hours. No new inning will be started after two hours from the first pitch. Umpires should communicate the time of the first pitch to the teams as the game begins.

**There will be NO TIME LIMIT in the playoffs.**

If at the end of four innings (three-and-a-half if the home team is ahead), one team has a lead of 10 or more runs, the team with fewer runs shall concede the game.

Each half inning shall be concluded after three outs or following the completion of the play on which a seventh run of that half inning is scored. All runs that score on the final play of the inning will be counted. The run limit will NOT be in effect for the final inning of play. **Coaches are urged to communicate with each other and the umpire during the game as the time limit approaches to establish which inning will be the final inning. The umpire will declare, before the start of the final inning, that the run limit will be lifted.**

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## **OFFENSE**

All batters shall use helmets with facemasks.

The regular Little League substitution rule shall be used. **See LL Rule 3.03**

Batters will be allowed to attempt to advance to first base on a dropped third strike.

Once the ball is under control within the 8-foot pitcher's circle, runners shall immediately advance or retreat to a base. **See attached.**

Following one warning for the team, any runner who leaves the base before the pitcher releases a pitch shall be called out. **See LL Rule 7.08(a)(5)**

At any time that one team has a lead of ten or more runs, stealing by that team shall not be permitted.

Teams will be allowed to use a courtesy runner for the catcher when there are two outs.

## **DEFENSE**

Nine players shall be permitted on the field for the defensive team. Outfielders shall remain in "natural outfield positions." An outfielder should not be used to cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

## **PITCHING**

Pitchers will pitch from 43 feet.

Players will be permitted to pitch only four innings per game. One pitch in an inning shall constitute an inning pitched.

## Softball Base Running:

# The Pitcher's Circle and the Rule

In Little League Softball, the proper interpretation of the running rule is imperative. In order to utilize the base running rule, the eight-foot radius circle surrounding the pitcher's plate must be adequately marked. This is the first and primary essential to our discussion.

In 7.08 (a) (5) Note 2, when the pitcher is in possession of the ball in the circle, all runners off their bases must immediately attempt to advance or retreat. Immediately, is interpreted to mean within a three-second time frame. It is equally important, from an umpire standpoint, to realize that a runner or runners may vacate their bases and begin to attempt to advance once, on EACH play or pitch. In the Little League Major division and below, runners may come off their base when the ball reaches the batter. In Junior, Senior and Big League divisions, runners may vacate their base when the ball is released by the pitcher. If the pitcher drops the ball at any time before delivery of the pitch, the ball is alive and all runners may advance at their own risk, without penalty.

Let's discuss a point that seems to be confusing to many, and it focuses around a batter-runner being awarded a base on balls. The batter-runner cannot be frozen at first base on a base-on-balls by merely returning the ball to the pitcher in the circle. The batter-runner after reaching first base may continue on, without stopping, in an attempt to reach second base. Said runner may stop in the baseline after rounding first base. At this point, the umpire should begin a three-second count on the runner. If the runner again begins movement to advance or retreat before the count reaches "three" and does not stop again, this is a legal action and should not be penalized. However, if the runner stops a second time, without an attempt by the defense, that runner is out immediately. On any base hit, the runner is allowed to continue advancement even if the pitcher has received the ball back in the circle. Again, in this case, a stoppage will cause a count to commence. The attempt to advance must be one continuous motion without a stoppage at a base. If a runner or runners are off their bases and making not attempt to advance, with the pitcher in possession of the ball in the circle, and the umpire's count reaches "three", the runner is out, the ball is dead, and no advance may be gained with the play. If multiple runners are in violation of the rule, the runner that left base first is called out. If multiple runners are in violation and the umpire cannot detect which runner was first to vacate their base, the lead runner will be called out, the ball is dead, and no advancement will be allowed.

A very important point to keep in mind is that, if the pitcher makes a ball fake at a runner, the runner or runners are again allowed to stop, change direction, or resume advancement. The pitcher must make an obvious attempt to play on the runner or execute a ball fake to allow the runner or runners to again stop without penalty. A "head fake" is not considered an attempt to make a play on the runner or runners.

One other point need to be discussed, pertains to runners on base who do not attempt to advance on a particular pitch. For example: With a runner on first base, the pitch reaches the batter, and runner does not attempt to come off base. The ball is returned to the pitcher in the circle, and the base coach, at this point, informs the runner that she was supposed to run. She now comes off the base. This violation should, and does, constitute an immediate stoppage of play by the umpire, the runner is called out, and no one else on base may advance.

The Softball base running rule is designed to speed up the game. It will be quite easy to interpret if you utilize the preceding points. Keep in mind, that softball players are well-trained and versed in the running rule. You will not see many mistakes or instances when you must enforce the immediate "out" call. Good Luck and enjoy the game of Softball.

By Dr. Mike Lantiere  
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