

SFSA 8U Rules 2021

Our league is first and foremost about FUN. We believe in an absolutely positive experience for the girls. This may be the players' first introduction to the concept of a team and being part of a team sport.

The following Sienna Plantation Softball Association ("SFSA") League rules supplement and augment the Amateur Softball Association of America ("ASA") rules as amended year-to-year. National Rules do not exist for Pixie (6u/8u) Divisions, therefore each state organization enforces its own rules, as seen here <https://www.usasoftballoftexas.com/page/show/4650072-j-o-rules>. If there is a conflict between League rule(s) and ASA rule(s), the League rule(s) shall be controlling. If a situation is not covered by the League rules, the ASA rules are controlling. Although the League rules and the ASA rules are meant to cover as many situations as possible, they do not cover all situations. In the rare circumstance where a situation is not covered by the League rules or the ASA rules, the judgment of the umpire will be upheld. SFSA Rules Committee will later consider the situation so that future rules can be clarified. All parties concerned will be provided with a fair opportunity to be heard. However, no protests are allowed.

PLAYING FIELD

- The distance between bases is about sixty (60) feet.
- A pitching rubber plate is marked thirty-five (35) feet from the point of home plate.
- A 16' diameter circle is drawn around the center of the pitching rubber plate.
- All bases must be anchored. First base is a safety red double-base.
- Hash marks are placed halfway between all bases, except not between home plate and first base.
- The coach pitcher must have at least one foot in the pitching circle while releasing the ball.
- Prior to the start of play each day, playing conditions will be determined and rainouts will be decided by the Field Operations Coordinator, President, or Vice President. For a game in progress, the home plate umpire is responsible for continuation, delays, and/or cancellation of play due to weather or field conditions, as per ASA.

PLAYING RULES

- An eleven-inch AD Starr Hard Ball shall be used during the game.
- There is a scoring limit of 5 runs per inning per team.

- The Mercy Rule is as follows: 15 runs any time after 3 innings. If a team is behind by 5 runs or fewer in the last inning, that team will be allowed to bat.
- An official game will be a maximum of 6 innings, and no new inning will start after the expiration of 60 minutes. The home team does not have to bat or finish batting if leading in the last inning. A tie will be counted in the standings. Official start time for the game is at the first pitch of the game.
- On-deck batters are allowed during games.
- There will be one minute between innings with the one-minute time limit commencing upon the third out. Coaches may use this time to make accuracy adjustments for their next batter.
- Unless an umpire is present, both teams are responsible for providing a volunteer umpire behind home plate and for the infield.
- Infielders may line-up parallel with the player pitcher but no closer.
- With the exception of the catcher, no other defensive player may play closer to the batter than the pitcher.
- Outfield players must remain in the outfield grass until the ball has been hit.
- The player pitcher shall be deemed as having the ball in control when the ball is secured in the pitchers' hand and/or glove while having one foot in the circle. Umpire may declare a time out and a dead ball at this point, unless an attempt to make a play on the opposing base runner(s) is made (e.g., if the pitcher leaves the circle with the ball, the ball is thrown to another player to tag the runner out, the runner tries to bait the pitcher to throw, etc.). Runner(s) may advance at her own risk until the umpire calls the time out or dead ball. Once the umpire has declared time and a dead ball, play must proceed towards the next batter. Play can also be ruled "dead" when fielder possessing the ball tags the lead runner while that runner is on 1st, 2nd or 3rd base.
- Two coaches are allowed in the outfield foul areas to help instruct the girls on defense.
- All teams shall bat the entire bench. Late arriving players will be added to the bottom of the line-up. It is the manager's responsibility to inform the umpire and scorekeepers of any late additions to the line-up.
- Managers are responsible for the actions and behavior of their players and all who stay on the bench or near the bench or players' area. Poor sportsmanship, throwing of equipment, fighting and baiting of players, Coaches, or Officials will not be allowed. Guilty persons shall be asked to leave the playing area, not just the playing field and dugout. Managers are responsible for enforcing this rule.
- A coach, player, or spectator will not direct a derogatory or abusive remark (including foul language) to another coach, player, spectator, or umpire. Actions of this kind will cause the suspension of a coach or player, the ejection of a spectator from the park, and/or forfeiture of game if necessary.
- Only the Manager or Acting Manager is allowed to approach the Umpire.

PLAYERS

- No jewelry is allowed on the field, except for a medical bracelet.

- To encourage rotation of players, no player shall remain at the same defensive position for more than two consecutive innings.
- A player arriving late may immediately enter the game but must be added as the last name of the batting order. A player arriving late is not required to play the infield.
- Positive chants and cheers are encouraged and acceptable.
- A game may start if a team is able to field 7 or more players. If a team cannot field a team, the manager must notify the Commissioner, President, Vice-President, or Division Coordinator, and the opposing manager 24 hours prior to the game. The game will be rescheduled.
- A game is forfeited if a team cannot field 7 players at the official starting time. The forfeit must be determined by the umpire. The teams may play, but the official standing counts as a forfeit.
- A coach may draft players from the same age division or the next lower age division in order to have up to 9 players. The opposing coach must approve any draft selection prior to the game start. A drafted player must play outfield positions (not infield positions) and must be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
- There are no penalties or automatic outs for playing with less than a full team.
- There shall be a minimum of 7 and no maximum defensive players on the field. All defensive players other than the six infield positions must play in the outfield and must remain in the outfield until the ball is hit or otherwise put into play but thereafter may advance infield.
- No player shall sit out more than one defensive inning per game unless forced by injury or illness. Every player must play at least one full inning in the infield every game unless a safety issue due to skill or ability may put players safety at risk.
- Managers must also balance the safety of each player with respect to a desired defensive position and should take into consideration player safety when deciding on which infield position a girl plays.
- If a player gets injured or sick during a game and is taken out and cannot bat, coaches must inform the umpire and scorekeepers and the player will not be allowed to re-join the game. The team must have 7 players to finish the game or forfeit.

PITCHING / BATTING / HITTING

- Every batter and base runner must wear a batting helmet with a face guard.
- **1st inning (Player Pitcher)** The defensive team will have a player pitcher during the 1st inning. The player pitcher will pitch from 30ft. The player pitcher will pitch three pitches to each of the 1st 6 batters. Balls and Strikes are not counted. If a batter is hit by a pitch the batter will be awarded 1st base. A batter may hit the ball and the ball will be considered a live ball. If the batter does not hit off the player pitcher the coach pitcher will come in to pitch a maximum of 3 pitches to the batter. The batter is allowed 2 additional pitches if fouled at the third pitch.
- **2nd inning and beyond:** The batter will receive a maximum of 5 pitches from the coach pitcher to put the ball in play. The batter is allowed 2 additional pitches if fouled at the fifth pitch. A tipped ball is considered a foul ball. After 2 foul ball, players is out. Player

can strike out if player swings at and misses 3 pitches or after a combination of swing and miss and foul, 3rd strike is swung at and missed.

- The coach pitcher must have at least one foot in the circle while releasing the ball.
- A ball that hits the coach pitcher is considered a dead ball – and a no pitch is called. Baserunners, if any, will return to their original base, and batter will receive another pitch. An intentional obstruction by the pitching or base coach is an automatic out. The umpire makes the decision on the automatic out.
- The player pitcher shall not line-up any closer to the batter than the pitching rubber BEFORE the pitch is released. The player pitcher may advance on the batter up to the edge of the pitching circle after the release of the pitch. The player pitcher must maintain at least one foot in the circle until the ball reaches home plate.
- Batters hit by a pitched (HBP) ball shall not be awarded first base. All pitches from the coach pitcher count towards the five-pitch total allowed including HBP.
- No intentional bunting is allowed. A full swing that results in a weakly hit fair ball will be allowed. No slap hits will be allowed.
- A batter may not throw her bat. The first infraction results in a warning to the batter and her team, and a subsequent infraction by any batter from the warned team results in an automatic out.

BASE RUNNING

- First base is a safety red double-base. For safety reasons, a runner advancing to first base is required to step and run through the red base when a play is being made at first base. The runner may step on the white base if no play is being made against her at first base or if she is advancing to second base.
- Once the ball is in play, the base runners may advance at her own peril until the umpire stops the play.
- A base runner who has progressed past the halfway hash mark on the base paths before a dead ball is called by the umpire will be awarded the next base, including home plate.
- No lead-offs before the pitch and no base stealing. The earliest a base runner may leave the base is AFTER the ball has been released from the coach or player pitcher's hand. The first infraction results in the base runner returning to the base, and a warning should be given to the runner and the team, and any subsequent infraction from any player of the warned team will result in an automatic out.
- A base runner is out when she deliberately crashes into a defensive player at any base whom is making a play or has the ball. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender can be ejected from the game.
- A defensive baseman must play her base and base path such as to allow fair access for base runners. An intentional attempt to block a base or base path is an obstruction and will negate any related out. A player unintentionally blocking a base or base path will be ruled upon at the umpire's discretion.
- A base runner may not cause intentional interference with the defensive player making a play on the batted or thrown ball (e.g., running into a fielder waiting to catch a ball, yelling "I Got It!" to cause a dropped ball, etc).

- A base runner running outside of base path will be called out. It is the umpire's discretion as to how far outside the base runner is allowed to run outside the base path.
- A base runner is entitled to continue to advance on a batted ball until the ball becomes dead.
- Sliding is permitted only in a feet-first manner and only at second base, third base, and home plate. Any base runner sliding in any manner other than feet first shall be called out by the umpire.
- A base runner is out if her manager, coach, or teammate touches her while the ball is in play.
- The infield fly rule is NOT in effect.

OVERTHROWS, BAD THROWS, STOP PLAY, AND DEAD BALLS

- An OVERTHROW is defined as any ball thrown out of the playing field, goes over or under the fence, enters the dugout, or becomes entangled in any structure out of play. The batter/runner WILL ADVANCE one base in safety on an overthrow. A thrown ball which hits the fence but remains in the playing field IS NOT an overthrow.
- If a BAD THROW or an ERRANT THROW to a base occurs, and the ball remains in the playing field without falling under the definition of an overthrow, the batter/runner may advance at her own peril.
- A ball that hits the coach pitcher is considered a dead ball – and a no pitch is called.
- The umpire has the sole discretion and the final call on automatic outs, stopping play, and calling a dead ball.

These rules are continually subjected to evaluation by the SFSA Board and the Rules and Competition Committee and may still be edited at a future date should player development be hindered or game play becomes detrimental to both teams as a result of any rule described herein. As a member of the ASA, the SFSA Board, and the Rules and Competition Committee, reserves the right to modify any and all rules for all age divisions regarding game play as they seem fit for their own league play. These rule changes, if any, may differ from standard ASA rules, but are allowable by the ASA for individualized league play.