

## BPALL Minor League SOFTBALL

### – Local Rules –

These Rules Apply to All BPALL games including those with Devon Strafford

Maximum Run Rule: 5 Runs per inning – Applies to ALL innings including the last inning;

Games are 6 Innings – However, cannot start a new inning after 1.5 hours. They usually run only 4 innings.

Maximum 3 walks per inning

- If a combination of three walks/hit batsmen occur in an inning, then the manager or coach pitches to his/her own players when a subsequent three-ball count is reached or if another batter is hit.
- Manager/coach must pitch from the 35 foot pitching rubber.
- After three walks/hit batsmen, no player can walk or take a base due to being hit
- Coaches can strike out their own players (called or swinging), but cannot walk them.

Stealing is allowed of all bases except for home. The pitched ball must cross the plate before the runner can leave the bag. One warning per game can be issued.

- No advancing on errant or over-throws. We want catchers to attempt to make the throw so that they can learn the skill.
- A team leading by six or more runs may not steal unless/until the lead is five runs or less.
- A runner starting on third base can only score as a result of a hit or when forced in by a walk/hit batsmen and cannot score on an attempted steal of another base or errant throw that results from such an attempt.

Runners can advance, one base, on overthrows--EACH overthrow, excluding throws to the pitcher.

- That is why it is important for us as coaches to teach the girls the importance of getting the ball to the pitcher. If the fielders keep throwing that ball around the infield, runners can continue to advance on overthrows--but always one base only.
- Once the fielders throw the ball to the pitcher--even if it gets by the pitcher--runners cannot advance beyond the base they were heading toward. For example, if the ball hit to the shortstop goes into centerfield after a bad throw to second, the runner going to second can go to third. If the centerfielder throws it in to the pitcher while the runner is advancing to third base, the runner must stop at third base--that's the one base on the overthrow. Even if it gets by

the pitcher, no more advancing by the runners (that's our local rule). However, if that centerfielder throws to a base to try to get a runner, and the ball is overthrown, runners can advance to the next base, as that would be another one base on an overthrow situation. Hence the importance of getting the ball to the pitcher. At this level, we begin to teach the girls the consequences of making bad throws and bad decisions.

Substitution - No player shall be required to sit out twice until everyone has sat once. If both teams have 10 players – Field 10 players so single player does not have to sit by themselves on the bench. Otherwise, play 9. Avoid playing 10 v. 9.

Batting order is continuous and is not affected by substitutions. Rotate the batting order throughout the season so that the same girls are not always at the bottom or top of the order. The last batters in the line-up should be near the top in the next game.

Players shall rotate positions.

- In a 4 inning game, every player must play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield.
- In a 5 inning game, every player shall play at least 2 innings in the infield.

Outfielders must be on the outfield grass at the beginning of each pitch. They cannot make an out at a base themselves; they must throw the ball to an infielder.

Pitching –

- LL rules require that no child pitch more than 6 innings in any one week.
- In BP Minors, no pitcher shall pitch more than two innings per game. We want to develop more pitchers and we cannot do this without giving more kids a chance to pitch. Also, to the extent there are great disparities among teams regarding quality of pitching, this will help level the playing field.

Action Positions - Catcher, Pitcher, 1st Base and 3rd Base are the action positions. Please try to play each player on your team in an action position at least one inning in each game. Only a few kids will be able to pitch and you may only feel comfortable with a few kids at first base – but don't let it be the same kids all the time.

Coaches on the Field – One coach may be on the field so long as the bench is not left unattended. At this level, this can actually be some of the best coaching we do. These games are slow moving. On the field coaching is a great opportunity to teach and quiz the girls about what they should be doing in a given situation. The girls get bored standing around and lose focus. This keeps them interested and engaged. Make it fun as well as instructional.

- But don't focus all of your attention on just one girl—keep them all involved
- Do NOT stop the game for a “teachable moment.” The game must keep moving along. Extended coaching and teaching can be done in the dugout or off the field of play.
- Do NOT stand next to, or run next to girls to tell them what to do during a play in the field. It's fine to give them direction on the field, since we do it from the dugout anyway. But keep a distance from the players—don't be on top of them.

This rule is subject to change as the season progresses and we see how it goes.

#### OTHER ISSUES

Relay races after the game – We've been doing this the past few years and the girls love it—might be the most fun part of the game!

- Not mandatory, of course. But they almost always want to do it.
- One team starts at home, the other at second base. If there is not the same number of girls, some will run twice. Don't let the same girls run twice all the time—spread it around.
- Make sure the girls stand away from the base to allow the opposing runners to run through the base.
- Use a ball or other object as the relay. This keeps it honest and fair—the girls get excited and leave before the other runner hits the bag. They have to stay on the base and get the ball from the runner. Ball/object cannot be thrown

#### Umpires

- They are students—It is NEVER acceptable to argue with an umpire
- Start each game with a friendly conference with the umpire and other manager. Agree on the ground rules, strike zone and any issues that are likely to come up.
- Always be positive with them. If they are clearly making bad calls—e.g., calling balls hitting the plate a strike, do two things: 1) talk it over with the other coach, if he/she agrees, 2) approach the umpire and begin with positive comments—“Hey Katie, you're doing a real nice job, we know you have the toughest job on the field. Just want to talk to you about the strike zone.....”
- If there are negative or derogatory comments about the umpiring coming from the crowd, it is the responsibility of the manager/coaches to address the issue and put an end to it. This kind of behavior cannot be tolerated.
- Please give any feedback—positive and negative—about the umpires to the league director after the game.
- Home teams pay the umpire

Winning team reports the outcome of a game by email to league director—e.g., subject line: “Florida beat USC on April 5.” In the case of a BP v. DS game, each team should report the result to its league director, win or lose.