

Coach-Pitch Softball League Rules

A. Objective of Softball

The objective of the Wentworth Ball Program coach-pitch Softball League is to teach softball skills and an understanding of the game to beginning players in a context that promotes an appreciation of good sportsmanship and fair play. This league is intended to be a logical transition from tee-ball to softball. Players develop the skills of batting, fielding and base running in this minimally competitive league while learning the rules that closely resemble those of girls softball. Emphasis is always placed on having fun, player safety, and sportsmanship! Safety has the highest priority in this program.

B. Coaches

- It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide leadership and organization, to teach fundamental softball skills, to encourage voluntary cooperation with players and parents, develop good rapport with players and their parents, to model good sportsmanship and to observe all league policies and rules.
- Coaches who are not pitching are advised to remain beyond the base paths and out of the infield when the ball is in play, and they must NOT touch the players or the ball when the ball is in play.
- Typically, a team at bat will have coaches near 1st and 3rd base to coach runners when the ball is hit. The team playing the field typically has 1 or 2 coaches standing in the short outfield to help position the defensive alignment.

C. Umpires

Wentworth Ball Program will provide one umpire for each game who will remain at home plate and will have charge of the game and will have final say in ALL calls. Coaches in the outfield will be responsible for assisting in safe-out calls at the bases, fly balls, base runners, etc. The umpires' responsibilities follow the usual lines, but also include judgment in four important areas of softball. These are:

- Determining when the ball is thrown back to the pitcher by an infielder, ending play or when a player calling time is in the proper position to call time. Umpire will signify the end of a play by raising an arm in the air and calling "TIME."
- Determining whether or not a base runner should return to a previous base.
- Determining when the bat is thrown after batting.
- Determining foul balls.

D. Scorekeepers

- Each team will designate a scorekeeper who will maintain the lineups and record hits, runs, and outs. Scorekeepers from each team should check scoring and agree on scores after each half inning. Scores will only be recorded until three outs or five (5) runs are made.
- Wentworth Ball Program will make every attempt to designate one official scorekeeper for every game to go along with scorekeepers for each team. This scorekeeper will have the final say in all disputes between team scorekeepers. In the event that an official scorekeeper cannot be assigned to a game, team scorekeeper will function as official scorekeepers with the umpire serving as the final arbiter of scoring disputes.

E. Scoring

- While scores are kept in individual games, coaches are expected to minimize the importance of winning or losing.
- Runs will be counted in each inning until the defensive team records three (3) outs or the offensive team scores five (5) runs, whichever comes first. After that, the teams will switch batting and fielding.
- In the event of a discrepancy between the scorekeepers from each team, the Wentworth Ball Program official keeping score will be the final say. Should the team scorekeepers have the same results with the official scorekeeper being different, the official scorekeeper will revise his/her scorebook to reflect that of the team

scorekeepers.

F. The Playing Field

- The playing field is nearly identical to other youth baseball/softball fields. Base path dimensions are 60 feet from home plate to first and third bases. The pitching rubber is approximately 40 feet from home plate. If field conditions permit, the base paths will be chalked.

G. The Game

- All games are to be four innings or 55-minutes whichever comes first. Games will be called at the end of the home team at-bat closest to the end of the time limit. Coaches must move their players on and off the field in a timely manner.
- The game is under control of the Wentworth Ball Program officials, with the home base umpire having charge of ALL judgment calls.
- A minimum of eight (8) players are required for a team to play. Should a team not have at least eight players show up for a game, that team will forfeit the game. Should both teams have less than eight players, the game will be rescheduled.
- All players must bat and play in the field at least once during the game.
- There will be no tiebreakers. Games ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie. The only exception to this is during the playoffs, where additional innings will be played until a team wins.

H. Safe Play

- In order to assure safety of the players, the batter and all base runners must wear a batting helmet. A batter may not remove her helmet at any time after beginning her turn at bat, until she returns to the dugout. If a player removes her helmet while running to a base, she will be called out. Both slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball bats may be used. All bats, wooden, composite or aluminum must be clearly labeled by the manufacturer as a softball bat.
- Coaches are strongly urged to maintain, with the help of scorekeepers and parents, order on the bench. Players should remain behind the fences unless preparing to bat. No practice swings or “on-deck” batters are allowed.
- Should an injury occur, or appear to occur, the first coach or umpire who sees it should call an immediate time-out to attend to the player. Play will stop immediately. All players should sit on the ground where they were standing when the time-out is called. When play resumes, the coaches, with the agreement of the umpires, should determine where any base runners and/or batter should be fairly placed.

I. Defensive Play: The Positions / Substitutions

- There are six infield positions that teams must try to fill for every game: pitcher, 1st base, 2nd base, shortstop, 3rd base and catcher. There are four outfield positions that should be filled by each team unless a team has a shortage of players: Right field, right center field, left center field and left field. Should a team have more than ten players, then they may play the extra players BEHIND the four outfielders. Should a team not have enough players to fill each outfield position, the coach may place players at any position on the field at his/her discretion, so long as a minimum of eight players are on the field.
- Player substitutions will take place when the fielding team comes in to bat between the second and third innings. Coaches must notify the official scorekeeper about substitutions BEFORE the first batter hits. Once a player is removed from the roster for substitution purposes, they are NOT allowed to return to the game unless a player is injured and no other players are available. The ONLY exception to this rule is when a game goes to extra innings during playoffs. In that scenario, players who were replaced by a substitute player during regulation ARE allowed to be added back to the roster during extra inning play ONLY.
- Substitutions will NOT be permitted for defensive players unless an injury or some other instance requiring a player to leave the field occurs. Players leaving the field because of a call or play they disagree with will not be allowed to continue to play once they leave the field and will not be allowed to have a substitute replace them for the duration their team is in the field. Once the team comes in to bat, a player may then be substituted for the player no longer eligible to continue playing.
- The defensive team must place a player at the pitcher position. The player must straddle the designated circle

on either side of or behind the coach who is pitching, but NOT forward of the coach. This allows the player to be a safe distance from the coach while maintaining a proper defensive stance.

J. Coach Pitcher

- Each team must provide a pitcher from one of their coaches. This person will be designated the coach-pitcher for their team. In the event that a coach cannot pitch, a team may designate the parent or guardian of one of their own players as a pitcher. Should no one from the parents/guardians be available to pitch, the team may allow an older player on their team to pitch or a coach from the opposing team to pitch. All attempts should be made to ensure that the coach asked to pitch is not the same coach pitching for his/her own team, but this is left to the discretion of the coaches present and the Wentworth Ball Program official. In the event that a team must use a coach from an opposing team as its pitcher, that team will forfeit its right to appeal that game unless a blatant infraction of the rules or good sportsmanship has occurred. All attempts to have an official from Wentworth Ball Program will be made to observe the game, but this cannot be guaranteed. It is therefore incumbent upon each team to make sure a coach is available to pitch every game.
- The coach-pitcher will pitch to his/her team ONLY, except in situations where no other person can be found to pitch to the opposing team. The coach-pitcher will take his/her position inside the pitcher's circle but may step outside of the pitching circle on the pitching stride with the forward foot. The back foot MUST remain inside the pitching circle until the ball is released. Once released, the coach-pitcher may move outside of the pitching circle.
- The coach-pitcher must pitch underhand from a standing position.
- The coach-pitcher must present the ball above his/her head to signify to the defense the ball is going to be pitched while quickly looking to confirm that the defense is ready. The umpire may call "Time Out" if they determine the defense not ready.
- Once a coach starts pitching an inning as the coach-pitcher, he/she must finish pitching the inning unless injured or otherwise incapacitated. In such an event, an assistant coach must pitch for the remainder of the inning. If no other assistant coach is able to pitch for that inning, an older player from that team may be allowed to pitch or a coach from the opposing team may be allowed to pitch for the remainder of that inning, as well as the remainder of the game.

K. Defensive Play: Ending the Play

- The defensive team should make every effort to make an out whenever possible, thus teaching softball situations and skills. However, when an out is made, play continues until it is stopped under any of the following rules:
- Play stops when the ball leaves the hand of an infielder with the intention of throwing it to the pitcher, or, when thrown by an outfielder with the intention of throwing it to the pitcher, the ball crosses the baseline. The pitcher does not actually have to catch or control the ball in order to stop play. (The purpose of this rule is to recognize that younger players have more difficulty catching the ball than older players) Once a player begins her throw to the pitcher with the intention of ending the play, the umpire will call time to stop play. The ball MUST be in the infield portion of the field when the umpire calls time to end a play.
- The play does not end if the throw was intended for a defensive player other than the pitcher, such as a shortstop or a baseman. The throwing intention of the fielder is the sole judgment of the umpire(s).
- If a ball is overthrown to the first or third baseman, then the runners may attempt to get only one base and the play stops. If a ball is overthrown to the second base then the runner may attempt to get one base but the play is not stopped until the umpire calls time.
- The requirement that play has ended when the ball is thrown back to the area of the pitcher forecloses the possibility that the pitcher may put the ball in play again by throwing to a base in an effort to get a base runner out. Once play is stopped it may not be resumed until the next batter puts the ball in play.

L. Offensive Play: Batting

- Once the batting order is established, it must be followed throughout the game. A batting position may be maintained for a player who may arrive late, until that position in the batting order has been passed while the team is at bat. At that point, if the player has still not arrived, she is placed at the bottom of the lineup (or at the top if it is the 2nd inning).
- The batter will be thrown five pitches. There are no walks or bases by hitting a batter. If a pitch hits a batter it

counts as a pitch. If the batter does not hit one of the five pitches, the batter is out on the fifth pitch, unless the ball is batted foul and not caught (foul ball or foul tip caught by the catcher or another player in the field is an out.) The batter shall continue batting until the batter (a) swings and misses the ball (b) is put out or (c) is called out by the umpire.

- Any fly ball hit into the air and caught (pop-up) shall be an out, whether in fair or foul territory. There is no infield fly rule.
- If a batted ball hits the coach-pitcher, the ball is dead and it will NOT be counted as a pitch and the batter must hit again. If the umpire deems that a coach purposely allows a ball to hit them or does not make an effort to move out of the way of a batted ball, the umpire will issue a warning to the coach and that pitch will not count against the batter. If the umpire deems the coach is not making an effort to move out of the way from a batted ball after the warning is issued, the umpire will call the batter out and all base runners will return to the base they were on at the beginning of the at-bat.
- Players must lay the bat down after a hit. If a player throws a bat after hitting, the umpire will warn the batter and her coach once play has stopped. The second time the same batter throws a bat after hitting, whether it is on the current at-bat or a later at-bat, the umpire will call the batter out.
- Coaches must NOT touch players while a ball is in play, either on the defensive or offensive side. A warning will be given to ANY coach touching a player. Any player the coach touches during play after the warning will be called out.

M. Offensive Play: Base Running

- There will be no lead-offs. Base runners must be touching their respective bases when the ball is hit.
- A base runner may be forced out or tagged with the ball in traditional softball fashion. A base runner that runs wide out of the base path to avoid being tagged out will be called out by the umpire. A base runner that is hit by a batted ball is not out unless she intentionally steps on or kicks the ball.
- When the defensive team overthrows the ball at a base and it goes out of control of the defensive team in fair or foul territory, the base runners are entitled to only one more base. But she must earn it; it is not automatic. If a ball thrown past a player is too far out of play for the defensive team to make a play on the runners, the runners will advance one base and play will stop.
- When the defensive team returns the ball to the area of the pitcher to stop play (dead ball), a base runner that is more than halfway to the next base may continue to that base. If the base runner has not reached halfway when the play is dead, the base runner should return to the previous base. When the lead runner of two or more runners has not reached halfway, she and all runners behind her must return to their previous bases. This normally is the judgment of the field umpire, though both umpires may cooperate in this determination. If there is a discrepancy between the field judges, the umpire will have the final say.

N. Game Procedures and League Policies

- Scorekeepers for each team should exchange lineups and batting orders prior to each game.
- Team jerseys should be worn for each game.
- Lightning requires immediate removal of all participants from the field. A rainstorm may interrupt or cause the postponement of a game. Games will not be postponed because of the threat of bad weather. If weather or field conditions are questionable, the Wentworth Ball Program officials will determine when a game is to be called and will notify the coaches who will notify their players. Rainouts will be rescheduled by the Wentworth Baseball Coordinator.
- Each team should line up on the base line in front of their dugout immediately following the game to shake hands with the opposing team. Good sportsmanship will be encouraged at all times.
- Profanity, abusive language, or any taunting, abusive bantering or baiting will not be tolerated from players, coaches or anyone on the Wentworth premises. Arguments over rules and especially judgment calls by umpires should be avoided at all times. In the event of a controversy, coaches should continue the game in a sportsmanlike manner and discuss the problem with the Wentworth Ball Program official after the game so that all rules can be clarified. Should a coach feel a call cost them the game, they may file a formal complaint with the Wentworth Baseball director. A review of the game will be made and a final determination of the outcome will follow any investigation. The Baseball director will have the final say in any dispute.
- The safety of the players is the foremost concern of the Wentworth Baseball program. As such, should there

be any instance of a coach, parent or other adult physically or verbally abusing a player, that person will be asked to leave the premises immediately.