

# Juniors Division

## 2021 Rules Supplement

Feb 2021 - Tosa and Greendale Twi Nite

The following rules have been accepted and adopted by the Head Coaches and Director of both Tosa Fastpitch and Greendale Twi-Nite and are effective for Intercommunity Play in the Juniors Division.

### 0.00 APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES

- 0.01. The primary rules used by the League are those established by USA Softball (USA), as set forth in the most recent edition of the USA Rules Book. All Coaches and Umpires in the League are expected to be familiar with the USA Rules.
- 0.02. The League Rules as stated in this Supplement are additions, revisions or modifications to the USA Rules, reflecting the League's policies and goals, as well as the ages and abilities of the players. The League Rules always supersede the USA Rules. Whenever there is an inconsistency between the provisions of a League Rule and a corresponding USA Rule, the League Rule shall govern.
- 0.03. To the extent possible, the USA Rules and the League Rules should be interpreted in a way that promotes the League's policies of safety, instruction and sportsmanship. However, rules that are clearly stated and applicable to a particular situation may not be modified, overruled or limited by a general reference to League policy. **Coaches and Umpires do not have authority to change or disregard the League Rules by mutual agreement.**
- 0.04. From time to time the League may publish official "Rules Interpretations" addressing certain USA Rules or League Rules that have generated confusion or controversy. Rules Interpretations are considered by the League to be authoritative, but they are not intended to establish new rules or change existing ones. Instead, the Rules Interpretations are designed to help Umpires and Coaches locate and understand the actual rules, and provide useful examples for their application.
- 0.05. The respective league's Director has the authority to apply, modify or omit any of the League rules in a manner consistent with the mission and operation of the League.
- 0.06. For purposes of these League Rules, the following definitions shall apply:
  - a. "Umpire in Charge" means the Umpire who is calling balls and strikes. Please note that most Juniors games will not have an umpire, unless a coach or parent volunteers.
  - b. A player is considered "present" only if the player is actually able to participate in the game (i.e. is in uniform, has no medical condition preventing play such as a cast or splint, etc.)

### 1.00 TIME

- 1.01. Starting and Forfeit Times
  - a. "Game Time" means the starting time indicated on the published game schedule. For make-up or rescheduled games, "Game Time" means the starting time indicated by the Director.
  - b. For each game one team will be designated the Home or Away team on the schedule.
    - Both teams shall be at their benches five minutes before the start of the game to ensure an on-time start.
  - c. If both teams have at least 7 players present, the game must start at Game Time.

- d. At 10 minutes after Game Time, the Umpire in Charge shall declare the game forfeited by a team that does not have at least 7 players present. (NOTE: A forfeit may also be declared at any time as provided in Rules 5.02, 9.03, 13.03 and 13.04).
- e. If neither team has enough players present 10 minutes after Game Time, the game shall be rescheduled by the Director.
- f. If a game is forfeited, the teams are encouraged to play a scrimmage game.

1.02. Time Limits (See Playoffs Exception at the bottom of rule 1.02)

- a. No new inning may begin more than 1 hour and 20 minutes after Game Time (the "New Inning Limit") for any reason.
- b. The last inning started before the no new inning time limit will be completed. NOTE: Using unreasonable "delay tactics" to get to the 1 hour 20 min New Inning Limit is not sportsmanlike, nor what we want to teach our young players.
- c. The New Inning Limit (1 hour and 20 minutes) is measured from Game Time, which means the scheduled starting time (see Rule 1.01(a)). They are not measured from the time that a game actually starts. These limits may not be extended or waived by the Umpires or Coaches, regardless of the circumstances.
  - **EXCEPTION:** When delays experienced before or during a game (for example, due to another game or organization occupying the field, weather, correct field conditions.) this time may be added to the New Inning Limit. The time the first pitch is thrown or the amount of time added should be agreed upon by both Head Coaches and the Umpire in Charge.
- d. If a doubleheader is to be played, the New Inning Limit shall be 1 hour 5 minutes. Doubleheaders are subject to the Game rules set forth in Section 2.00. The second game of the doubleheader shall begin no more than 15 minutes after the conclusion of the first game.
- e. **Playoffs Exception:** If a playoff game is tied at the end of the last inning, the game will be decided using the California Tie Breaker Rule. Visiting team will bat first with the player that made the last out of the last inning starting on 2nd and 1 out counted against the team. Then the home team would have a chance to bat. This will continue until there is a winner. The pitching inning limit would not apply to extra innings, but you would NOT be able to bring back in a pitcher you had been previously removed.

1.03. Official Time

- a. The timepiece of the Umpire in Charge shall be the official time.
- b. Prior to Game Time Coaches should synchronize their watches/cell phones with the timepiece of the Umpire in Charge.

## 2.00 THE GAME

2.01. Cancellation Due to Weather or Playing Conditions

- a. The owners of the fields have the authority to cancel any games scheduled on their fields. If the owner cancels games at their fields, that decision is final even if the Coaches and Umpires believe the field to be in playable condition.
- b. If a game is canceled due to weather (or any other reason), the cancellation announcement will be sent to all affected participants via email and/or text. We will attempt to give as much notice as possible. When in doubt, check your email.
- c. If the cancellation has not been communicated prior to Game Time, the decision to play or cancel the game due to weather conditions shall be made by the Umpires under Rule 2.01(d).

- d. During the hour prior to Game Time and during a game, the Umpires will be sole judges as to whether the field is playable or not, and their decision is final. The Umpires should try to reach an agreement about whether to cancel, play or continue playing a game, but if they are unable to agree then the decision of the Umpire in Charge shall govern. If possible, the Umpires should notify the Head Coaches for both teams simultaneously of the decision to cancel a game.
- e. During the game or 35 minutes prior to the game, warm ups or the game shall be suspended immediately at the first observation of lightning. If lightning persists for more than 15 minutes, the game shall be cancelled with no possibility for a restart that day. The game may resume 30 minutes after the last sign of lightning if the lightning lasted less than 15 minutes and field conditions are still playable. The timing of these rulings and resumption of play shall be agreed upon both Head Coaches and the Umpire in Charge.
- f. It is the responsibility of both Head Coaches to notify the Director if a game was cancelled during warm ups or the game.
- g. Cancelled games will generally be rescheduled to the next scheduled rain date. If no rain date has been scheduled, the home team's league director will select a game time based on field availability and will communicate this to the coaches.
- h. If the game is cancelled after play has started, both Head Coaches shall agree on the inning, score, runners on base, balls and strikes as the game shall be resumed from that point when it is rescheduled.

#### 2.02. Regulation Game and Extra innings

- a. A game ends when 6 innings have been completed within the New Inning Limit.
  - b. The number of innings played does not matter to consider the game complete as long as the game is played until the New Inning Limit. For example, if you have only played four innings at the New Inning Limit the game would still be considered complete.
  - c. In all other situations, 4 innings shall qualify as a complete game, or 3-1/2 innings if the home team has the lead. For example, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning the Visiting Team leads 8-6. Rain then begins and the game is cancelled. The game would be considered an official game with a final score of 8-6.
  - d. If 6 full innings are completed before the New Inning Limit and the score is tied, the teams may play one extra inning.
  - e. Games that begin but are cancelled before qualifying as a complete game will be rescheduled and replayed from the point when play was suspended. **When the game resumes, the official time for the game will be reset.** The game will be played until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning or until the New Inning Limit have been met. For example, if the game was suspended 33 minutes into the game, when it is replayed the time starts over.
    - As noted earlier, if the game is cancelled after play has started, both Head Coaches shall agree on the inning, score, runners on base, balls and strikes as the game shall be resumed from that point when it is rescheduled.
- a. The maximum number of runs per half-inning is 5.

#### 2.03. Determining Winner and Final Score; Ties

- a. If an inning is completed after the New Inning Limit, the game shall end and all runs scored by either team shall be included in the final score. The winner shall be the team that has the lead or, if neither team has a lead, the game shall be declared a tie.
- b. If the home team has the lead after the New Inning Limit and completion of 1/2 inning, or gains the lead while batting after the New Inning Limit, the game shall immediately end.
- c. Ties represent 1/2 game won and 1/2 game lost in the standings.

2.04. Games cannot be protested. Once the game has ended the final score stands.

### **3.00 INJURIES**

- 3.01. Coaches are in charge of any player on their team who is injured. It is the duty of the Coaches to get assistance and medical treatment for players as required, until the injured player is in the custody of a parent or other guardian. Coaches must report all significant injuries to the Director within 24 hours.
- 3.02. In the event of an injury where a player needs immediate assistance (an injury which is so severe that treatment should not wait until completion of the play) Umpires have the authority to stop the game so that the player can receive immediate medical attention. After the player has been tended to, the Umpires will use their judgment to position base runners.
- 3.03. A player or Coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered. A Coach may insert a substitute (including a pinch runner) at any time for a bleeding player. Once the bleeding has been stopped and the wound has been covered, the player may re-enter the game with permission of the Umpire in Charge.

### **4.00 PITCHER, RUNNERS, BATTERS, FIELDERS**

4.01. Pitcher

- a. Juniors Division is coach-pitch.
- b. A player is still allowed to play the "pitcher" position for fielding purposes.

4.02. Runners

- a. No stealing
- b. No advancing from 3rd base on a pitched ball.
- c. No advancing on overthrows
- d. Runners may not attempt to advance on a dropped third strike.
- e. Base runners are required to avoid contact and/or slide if there is a close play at any base. A runner who runs into a defensive player who is legally blocking the base line or home plate, unless the runner is sliding, shall be called out and the ball shall be declared dead. The call shall be at the sole discretion of the Umpire and may not be challenged.
- f. Some, but not all, fields have a double base at first base called a "safety base." The purpose of the double base is to eliminate a collision between the fielder and base runner. Typically, the base in fair territory is white and the second base in foul territory is orange. If a safety base exists, the defense shall use the white partition and the offense shall use the orange partition when there is a play at first. Exception: if a throw being made to first base is coming from the catcher in foul territory on the first base side, the offense should use the white partition and defense should use the orange partition. Runners may use white partition of the base when rounding the base in route to second base if there is no play at first.

4.03. Batter

- a. COACH PITCH RULE: The coach will throw a maximum of 6 pitches to the batter. The batter can strike out looking or swinging, or by taking the 6th pitch - regardless of whether it is a ball or strike. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter may have another attempt, which can be repeated if there are repeated foul balls.

- b. The infield fly rule does NOT apply.
- c. During a hitter's at-bat, only one other player may warm up "on deck." The on-deck batter may warm up either inside the backstop or in an area outside the backstop that is safely distant from all player and spectator traffic and is designated by the Umpire as the team's on-deck area. If an on-deck batter warms up inside the backstop, he/she shall be positioned at least 15 feet from home plate and on the back side of the batter.
- d. Bunting and/or slap hitting is allowed. For safety reasons, faking a bunt and then swinging away is not allowed.
- e. Teams may not score more than 5 runs per half-inning

#### 4.04. Fielders

- a. A fielder may call time out only when in control of the ball and after the play has stopped progressing. Time out is only in effect after it is granted by the umpire.
- b. A defensive player may not block a base from a runner unless she is in possession of the ball; however, the defensive player may without penalty cross the base path in the act of fielding the ball. Penalty: A runner who attempts to reach a base and is illegally blocked by the defensive player is safe; ball remains live and play continues.
- c. A fielder may not block the base path in her regular fielding position. Penalty: A runner impeded by the fielder shall be safe at the base she is approaching and the fielder shall be subject to a warning; ball remains live and play continues.
- d. For fields that have a safety base, Rule 4.02(i) applies.
  - e. Teams may play with up to 4 outfielders (total of ten players in the field). Outfielders must begin each pitch positioned in the outfield (at least one foot on the outfield grass). (No extra players on the infield)

## 5.00 PLAYERS

### 5.01. Age Group During Calendar Year

- a. Children at least 7 years old as of September 1st are eligible for Juniors Division.
- b. Children 9 years old or older as of September 1st are ineligible for Juniors Division. Exception: the Director has the authority to grant eligibility if the player is in the same grade in school as typical players in this division (first or second grade).
- c. The Director has the authority to place younger players in this Division if doing so supports the mission and operation of the League.

### 5.02. On the Field

- a. In every inning for which a team has at least 10 players present, 10 players shall play in the field, including 4 in the outfield. Each outfielder must play one of the four quadrants (LF, LC, RC or RF) for the entire inning. Rovers or overlapping outfield positions are not permitted. **Outfielders must be positioned so their feet are touching the outfield grass.**
- b. In every inning for which a team has only 7, 8 or 9 players present, they shall all play in the field. There are no additional penalties (offensively or defensively) for playing with less than 10 players.
- c. If at any point during a game one team has fewer than 6 players present, the Umpire in Charge shall declare the game ended and a forfeit shall be awarded against the team having fewer than 7 players. (See Rule 0.05 (b) for the definition of "present".)

- d. In the event that a team knows in advance that less than 9 players will be present for a scheduled game, the team may use up to 4 willing players from a lower division (Minors) as substitute players. The Head Coach shall inform the opposing team's head coach of the substitution prior to the start of the game. The fair playing rules of Section 5.03 apply to the substitute players.

#### 5.03. Fair Playing Time

- a. No player may sit out 2 innings in a row. No player may sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning; however, pitchers are exempt from this requirement when they are pitching consecutive innings in conformance with Rule 4.01(a).
- b. No player may play the same position for more than 3 consecutive innings in a regulation game, with the exception that the pitcher is governed by Rule 4.01(a) and the catcher (there is no innings restrictions on the catcher). Players must play a balance of both an infield and outfield positions during the game. "Balance" is defined as no greater than three innings difference between infield and outfield positions. Pitchers and catchers are considered "neutral" positions for the purpose of this rule.
- c. All players present at the game will bat in regular rotation.
- d. A Coach may bench a player at any point in the game if, in the Coach's judgment, the player is not conforming to the League's Rules or Code of Ethics. The Coach must notify the Umpires at that time, and must also promptly notify the Director in writing of such action.
- e. A player who has sustained an injury that requires a cast, splint, or sling to be worn shall not be allowed to play in a game.
- f. If a player is removed from the game because of injury, illness or disciplinary action their place in the batting order will be skipped without penalty. Their place(s) may be filled according to the fair playing time rules of 5.03.

## 6.00 COACHES

- 6.01. Prior to the start of the game, each Head Coach shall provide the Umpire in Charge and opposing Coach batting order lineups listing their players' names and uniform numbers.
- 6.02. The Head Coach from the home team shall give one new ball to the Umpire in Charge before the start of each game.
- 6.03. Coaches are responsible to see that batters, runners and catchers have proper protection.
- 6.04. A Coach may visit each different pitcher on the mound once per inning, with a one-minute limit per visit. The second time a pitcher is visited by a Coach during an inning, that pitcher must be replaced.
- 6.05. Only an adult may be used as 1st and 3rd base coaches.
- 6.06. The Head Coach is responsible for keeping a score card and checking with the Umpire in Charge to verify the score at the end of every half inning. Coaches may designate a substitute for these responsibilities as needed.

## 7.00 Reporting Scores

- 7.01. Coaches or official scorers from each team shall verify the correct score each half inning.
- 7.02. Both coaches are responsible for reporting/entering the score from each game. Reach out to the Director for questions in regard to entering scores.

## 8.00 UMPIRES

- 8.01. Umpires shall make every effort to keep the game moving quickly, including (but not limited to) the following

actions: Starting the game on time; requiring the defensive team to take the field quickly between half-innings (limited to two minutes); encouraging batters to promptly enter and stay in the batter's box for their turn at bat; prohibiting "around-the-horn" throws by the defensive team following a put-out or a strike out; and always having a spare game ball ready to put into play after a foul ball.

- 8.02. In the event of persistent delay by a team or a player despite a prior warning, an Umpire may impose an appropriate penalty, such as charging the batter with a strike, the pitcher with a ball, or the team with an out.
- 8.03. If, in the Umpire's opinion, any unsafe conditions exist, the Umpire shall take the necessary steps to correct those conditions.
- 8.04. The Umpire in Charge is responsible for reporting, in writing to the Director within 16 hours, any player or coach ejected from a game, any suspension or forfeiture of a game, or any protest.
- 8.05. Umpire guidelines that have been issued in the past or in connection with any training program shall be interpreted only as guidelines and not as League Rules.
- 8.06. The Umpire in Charge has the authority to rule on any point that is not specifically covered in these rules.
- 8.07. In cases when an umpire is not provided by the league, a parent or coach may serve as umpire.

## **9.00 SPECTATORS**

- 9.01. All spectators must remain behind the screen or team benches.
- 9.02. No unauthorized people are allowed on the team bench, including parents. Coaches and Team Manager only.
- 9.03. If spectators' actions or conduct interfere with the game, the Umpire in Charge shall instruct Coaches for both teams to warn the spectators that the game is in danger of being called or forfeited. If the actions persist after that warning, the Umpire in Charge may first suspend play for no more than 10 minutes, to allow the offending spectators an opportunity voluntarily to leave the area. If the offending spectators decline to leave the area and they are clearly all associated with one of the teams, the Umpire in Charge may declare the game forfeited by that team. Otherwise, the Umpire in Charge shall call the game without declaring a winner, and refer the matter to the Director for resolution.

## **10.00 UNIFORMS AND PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

- 10.01. All players must wear complete uniforms. A complete uniform includes a league issued jersey and socks. The player is to provide softball pants and cleated shoes (Soccer shoes are acceptable). **For players safety, NO SHORTS ARE ALLOWED.** Any player without pants will not be permitted to play. Uniforms may not be altered except for size and fit. Players' shirts must be kept tucked in during a game. Exception: substitute players playing under the provisions of Section 5.02(d) may wear either their League issued jersey from the lower division or a borrowed jersey.
- 10.02. Catchers are required to wear the safety equipment provided by the League, including shin guards, a chest protector and a catcher's mask (or batting helmet with facemask). Players not wearing safety equipment will not be permitted to catch.
- 10.03. Fielders playing first base, shortstop, second base, third base or pitcher are required to wear a fielding face mask.
- 10.04. Players are required to wear a catcher's mask when receiving practice pitches.
- 10.05. Shoes with metal spikes are not allowed.
- 10.06. Players may not wear watches or jewelry on the field of play, other than for medical alert or religious reasons.
- 10.07. Helmets must include face masks and be USA approved. Chin straps are optional but recommended.

- 10.08. USA approved bats may be used in games. The league will provide bats, but players may have their own bats as well.
- 10.09. The Girls' Juniors Division shall use 11" softballs.
- 10.10. All equipment must be kept behind the out-of-play lines at all times during a game.
- 10.11. The use of mouthguards is recommended, but not required.

## **11.00 PLAYING FIELD AND GROUND RULES**

- 11.01. The center-line distance between the bases shall be 60 feet. The distance from the front side of the pitcher's rubber to the "tip" (back) of home plate shall be 30 feet.
- 11.02. The "field of play" shall be between the imaginary lines formed by extending the backstop. The area outside of those lines shall be out of play.
- 11.03. In separate documents, the League may establish different ground rules or dimensions for specific field locations.

## **12.00 INTERFERENCE WITH A LIVE BALL**

- 12.01. Whenever a Coach, team Manager or player on the defensive team (other than a fielder) intentionally interferes with a live ball or a fielder's attempt to make a play within the field of play (including foul territory), the ball shall immediately be dead. All runners shall be awarded one base from the base they occupied at the time of the interference. If the play began with a fair batted ball, the batter shall be awarded at least first base; otherwise, the batter shall have the same ball-strike count as before the act of interference.
- 12.02. Whenever a Coach, team Manager or player on the offensive team (other than the batter or a runner) intentionally interferes with a live ball or a fielder's attempt to make a play within the field of play (including foul territory), the ball shall immediately be dead. The batter shall be declared out, even if the play did not begin with a fair batted ball. All runners shall return to the bases they occupied at the time of the last pitch, unless there are three outs.
- 12.03. If a spectator interferes with a live ball or a fielder's attempt to make a play within the field of play (including foul territory), the Umpire in Charge shall have the authority and discretion to apply either Rule 12.01 or 12.02, or some other penalty of no greater benefit to the team disadvantaged by the interference.
- 12.04. Instances of interference (intentional or unintentional) by a runner or batter, or obstruction by a fielder, are covered by the USA Rules and explained in a Rules Interpretation issued by the League. The League publishes a Code of Ethics with which all Coaches and players are required to comply.

## **13.00 ETHICS AND PENALTIES**

- 13.01. All coaches, umpires and players are expected to conform to the League's code of ethics. Failure to conform to the code of ethics may result in reprimand, suspension or expulsion from the League.
- 13.02. An Umpire may eject a player or Coach from a game, without prior warning, for any of the following actions: deliberately throwing a bat, helmet or other equipment in a fit of anger; initiating malicious contact; using profanity or other foul language; using tobacco products on the bench or field; fighting; charging an Umpire; leaving one's bench or playing position for the purpose of fighting or physical confrontation; or any other flagrant violation of these Rules or the Code of Ethics. The Umpires may, but need not, issue a warning to the offending player or Coach after any such action.
- 13.03. An Umpire may eject a player or Coach from a game if, after having received a prior warning, the player or Coach engages in any of the actions identified in Rule 13.01 or any of the following actions: carelessly throwing a bat; making a fake tag; arguing excessively with an Umpire; using any tactics or language intended or likely to intimidate an opposing player or Coach or an Umpire; taunting or baiting an opposing player or Coach;



attempting to incite unsportsmanlike conduct by fans; intentionally delaying the game; or any other conduct not in accordance with these Rules, the spirit of fair play or the League's Code of Ethics.

- 13.04. A Coach who is ejected from a game shall leave the playing area immediately and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. A player who is ejected from a game may remain on the team's bench, but must refrain from any further violations of the Rules or Code of Ethics. Failure to comply with this Rule shall result in the game being declared a forfeit against the team of the ejected Coach or player.
- 13.05. If the Rules or the Code of Ethics are repeatedly violated by one team during a game, the Umpires may, after an appropriate warning, declare the game a forfeit against the offending team.

## **14.00 PRACTICE**

- 14.01. The League has implemented a schedule that will allow teams to practice during the regular season. Coaches are encouraged to contact the Director to confirm field availability. These practices should not be scheduled immediately prior to a game. League scheduled games and practice sessions, as well as third party events where a permit has been issued, shall take precedence over a practice.

## **15.00 STANDINGS**

- 15.01. Official standings shall be kept by the league Directors. Current standings will be posted on the shared league scheduling document.
- 15.02. The team with the highest winning percentage shall be declared the season champion.
- 15.03. In the event of a tie, the champion will be decided based on the following tiebreakers (in this order):
- a. Win/loss record in head-to-head competition
  - b. Runs allowed in head-to-head competition (team with fewest runs allowed wins tiebreaker)
  - c. Runs allowed overall in season play (team with fewest runs allowed wins tiebreaker)
  - d. Runs scored overall in season play (team with most runs scored wins tiebreaker)
  - e. Coin toss. Team with the tallest player calls the toss.

The same tiebreakers shall be used to seed tournament brackets, if applicable.