



## Zeeland Little League Minors Softball Rules

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### General Rules

- A regulation game consists of six (6) innings.
  - A new inning may not start after 1 hour 30 minutes from the game start time.
  - A drop dead time is at 2 hours from the game start time.
  - If the game is tied after 6 or more complete innings, extra innings may be played so long as the time limits are still followed.
- A game becomes official after losing team has had 3 turns at bat, or a time limit is reached regardless of inning.
- A minimum of 8 players are required to start a game. Teams may follow the Sub Policy in situations where the team has less than 9 of their own players.
- 11" softball will be used.
- There is no mercy (10-run) rule.
- At 45 minutes before game time, visiting team gets the cage, home team the field.
- At 25 minutes before game time, visiting team gets the field, home team the cage.
- Pregame field time is not guaranteed if a game is being played on the field prior to your game.

### Offense Rules

- Rocket batting rule, everyone bats.
- Offense team ends their 1/2 inning at bat after any of the following occur:
  - 3 outs are made
  - 5 runs are scored (innings 1-3)
- 5 run max per inning for innings 1-3. Unlimited runs allowed per inning thereafter.
- A batter cannot be "walked" (see pitching rules)
- In Games 1-5, no stealing is allowed
- In Games 6-10 and Post-season, runners may only steal if the ball gets behind the catcher
  - Runners may only advance one base on a steal
  - Teams may only score 2 runs per inning via advancing home on a wild pitch. Runners will be returned to 3<sup>rd</sup> base if they are the 3<sup>rd</sup> runner to score on a wild pitch that inning.
- "Ball in the circle" rule: following LL Rule 7.08(a)
  - When the pitcher is in possession of the ball in the circle and is not making a play (for purpose of the rule, feinting a throw is considered a play), all runners off their bases must immediately attempt to advance or retreat. Immediately, is interpreted to mean within a three-second time frame.



- Runners may only advance one base on overthrows that leave field of play.
- Runners may not slide headfirst into any base.
- Bunting is allowed
- Batter is out on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike.
- No on deck batters are allowed.
- If the team's catcher is on base with 2 outs, she may be replaced on the bases by the last out in the line-up (Courtesy Runner Rule)

## Defense Rules

- Free substitutions are allowed (meaning players may switch positions in the field and/or go from the bench to the field an unlimited amount of times)
- Facemasks are required for all players playing an infield position.
- Players must have equal playing time in the field and have the opportunity to play multiple positions.

## Pitching Rules

- The pitcher will pitch from 35 feet.
- A batter will not be "walked" by the pitcher.
  - If a pitcher throws four (4) balls before three (3) strikes, the offensive coach must step in to pitch
  - When the offensive coach steps in, he/she will pitch the remaining allowable strikes to the batter
  - Umpires will still call balls and strikes
  - The coach will continue to pitch to the batter until a ball is put in play or the batter strikes out swinging or on a called 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
- A hit by pitch will award the batter first base. *NOTE – if a ball thrown by the pitcher begins rolling and then hit the batter, it will be counted as a ball. It is umpire's discretion if the ball was rolling.*
- If a pitcher reaches ball 4 to 5 batters in the inning, she must be replaced by a different pitcher for that inning. The walks do NOT have to be consecutive.
  - Teams may use/reenter the same pitcher multiple times
  - This rule is intended to give players opportunities to pitch, but also ensure that games have action for both the offense and defense.