

# Old Dominion Girls Softball League

## League Rules for Fall 2023

The following rules govern all play for the Old Dominion Girls Softball League. For all divisions, any rule not covered will follow the official Babe Ruth Softball Rule Book.

### 1. Rosters

- a. Rosters must be turned into the League Commissioner prior to the opening of the regular season.
- b. Associations must be able to provide proof of age for all players upon request.
- c. No player can be added to a team roster after the team has played half of its regular season games.
- d. All roster additions must be reported to the League Commissioner before the player is allowed to participate in a game. Failure to do this will result in forfeiture of all games in which that player has participated.

### 2. Playing Rules

- a. All divisions will use an all-inclusive batting order (all players present bat) for both regular season and tournament play. **8U and 10U will use a continuous batting order during regular season play only.** (Batting order is set at the first game and does not change, the batting order picks up where it left off the previous game. i.e., if batter #5 was the last at bat the previous game, then batter #6 is the lead-off batter the next game.) All teams have free defensive substitutions, except pitchers. **Continuous batting does not apply to 12U and 16U teams.**
- b. There will be no slaughter rule in any division. However, each team may only score a maximum of 5 runs per inning.
- c. All games are 75 minutes long and can end in a tie. If there is no game following and regulation time has expired, one extra inning will be played if both coaches agree. For all divisions, no player may sit out more than one consecutive defensive inning unless injured or sick.
- d. A courtesy runner may be used at any time for the pitcher or catcher of record (i.e., the pitcher or catcher who pitched/caught the previous defensive inning, except in the top of the first inning). The courtesy runner will be the preceding batter in the line-up who is not on base.
- e. 8U Machine, 10U and 12U teams may play with 10 players (4 outfielders). The outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass or at least 12 feet behind the baselines – whichever is closer to home.
- f. All teams must field a player as a catcher. The one exception to this rule is for 8U teams where there are only 8 defensive players available to play (minimum number required) – at which point they have the option of playing without a catcher. In this scenario, the defensive team MUST be sure that a coach is positioned near the backstop to collect balls that are not in play.
- g. A “thrown bat” is a bat that is released during or following a swing in a manner that could be viewed as a hazard to other players/coaches/umpires on the field (judgement call to be made by the home plate umpire), whether or not the thrown bat results in an injury. The first time a thrown bat occurs in a game, the player will receive a warning. The second (or any subsequent) time a thrown bat occurs in a game, that player will be called out.
- h. Coaches will keep track of pitching innings in their scorebooks. Each game, scorekeepers on both teams must validate eligible pitching innings prior to the game beginning.
- i. Coaches are required to carry a complete printed roster with them at all games. The roster must include player names, date of birth and jersey numbers (if applicable). If an opposing coach or umpire requests to view the roster, it must be supplied, or the opposing coach can declare the game will be played under protest. If the roster is not supplied upon request during a tournament game, the result of the game will be a forfeit.
- j. An inning is considered to have ended and the next inning to have started when the 3<sup>rd</sup> out has occurred in the bottom half of the inning.

### 3. Forfeit/Pull-ups

- a. If a team does not have enough players to start a game, and the umpire has already arrived, the forfeiting team will be responsible for the entire umpire fee for that game (if a fee is charged).
- b. Teams must start with a minimum of eight (8) players for 8U, 10U, 12U and a minimum of seven (7) for 16U.
- c. If a player is not present at the start of a game, the team has the option to leave them out of the batting lineup. If they choose to include them in the lineup and they are not present when their spot comes up to bat, an out is called. When a player shows up late to a game that is not in the lineup, they MUST be added to the bottom of the lineup. There are no restrictions on defensive positions for the late players (other than in the case of a pull-up that is not permitted to play as pitcher or catcher).
- d. There will be a 10-minute grace period for the first game **ONLY**. However, the game clock will start at the regularly scheduled time. Playing of the game will begin as soon as both teams have at least eight (8) players for 8U, 10U, 12U and seven (7) players for 16U, and will end as if the game started on time.
- e. When playing short-handed (rule 3b) or when an injury occurs and a player must leave the game, or a player leaves the game for any other reason, a team does not have to take an out when the missed player(s) turn in

the batting order is reached. However, if the player leaving the game (for whatever reason) causes the team to fall below the minimum number of players required to start a game, then a forfeit will have to be called.

- f. When a player is ejected, an out will be taken when their spot in the batting order is reached.
- g. If a team is reduced to a number of players below the minimum as the result of an ejection, then the team will forfeit the game.
- h. A maximum of three (3) players from within your own Local Association may be 'pulled up' from the next lower age division to prevent forfeiture of a game. A 16U team with 8 players may draw 1; a team with 7 players may draw 2, and a team with 6 or fewer players may draw 3. In all other divisions teams with 9 players may draw 1, teams with 8 players may draw 2, and teams with 7 or fewer players may draw 3. If a 16U team has 9 or more players or a team in any other division has 10 or more players present from their regular team, NO pull-ups can be used. The use of pull-ups is OPTIONAL. For 12U and 16U fast-pitch, only players from other fast-pitch teams are eligible to be pulled up. For 10U fast-pitch, 8U Machine players may be pulled up.
- i. All pull-ups must wear the uniforms of their original team so as to distinguish them from the regular team member.
- j. During the regular season only, 8U teams may pull over from other 8U teams within their own league, a maximum of two players to avoid forfeiting a game. Again, the girls must wear their own uniforms so the players may be identified.
- k. All pull-ups or pullovers (8U only) must be placed at the bottom of the batting order. If a rostered player shows up where a pull-up or pullover is being utilized, the rostered player shall take the position of the pull up or pull over in the lineup and the pull up or pullover shall no longer be in the game.
- l. When utilizing a pull-up, they cannot play the position of pitcher or catcher.

## **2. Equipment**

- a. All Catchers in all fast-pitch divisions (including 8U machine) must wear a mask and helmet, hard shin guards and chest protectors. Catchers in all other divisions must wear a mask and helmet and a chest protector.
- b. In all divisions, all offensive players must wear a helmet with a face guard at all times. This includes batters, on-deck batters, runners and all youth base coaches.
- c. As required by Babe Ruth, all players in the pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup> base, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base positions are required to wear fielding masks.
- d. For 16U and 12U games, the home teams must furnish one new and one playable 12" COR .47 optic yellow softball. For all other games, the home teams must furnish one new and one playable 11" COR .47 softball. It is recommended that these be optic yellow as well.
- e. No steel cleats are allowed at any age level.

## **3. Division Commissioner Duties**

- a. Rescheduling any postponed game. Division Commissioners will have the final word with respect to when the game will be played. Every effort will be made to reschedule games on the home team's field. Any team not showing shall forfeit. If both teams fail to attend, that game will be canceled.
- b. Coordination of Umpires for rescheduling games.

## **4. Game Rescheduling**

- a. All games will be played as scheduled with the following exceptions:
  - i. Failure of an official umpire to show. In this case, the game may be played if both coaches agree to play with a non-sanctioned umpire. If the coaches agree, and the game commences, the coaches are honor-bound to complete the game. Any game played with a non-sanctioned umpire is not subject to protest. Failure of an umpire to show shall be made known to the Division or League Commissioner.
  - ii. Rain or other natural conditions that make the field unsuitable for play.
- b. The League rain out policy is as follows:
  - i. Make up games will be played on the following Saturday with a start time 4 hours prior to the original game start time (i.e., 1:30pm games will be rescheduled on the following Saturday at 9:30am). This is subject to field availability.
  - ii. Consideration of the schedule on the originally scheduled field will be primary. However, consolidation of teams may be necessary to facilitate umpires and may preclude use of the originally scheduled field.
  - iii. If the following Saturday does not have the same field availability at the timeslot indicated, the next available timeslot that same Saturday will be used. If there is no field availability at all on the following Saturday, or the rained-out game occurs on the last scheduled Sunday of the season, field availability during the week at appropriate times will be scheduled. If no such time exists during the week following the rained-out game, no additional attempts to reschedule will be made unless teams will not reach a minimum of 10 official games.
- c. The Division Commissioner's decision on make up place, time, and date will be final.
- d. All postponed games must be made up prior to the Division Tournament.

## **5. Scores**

- a. There will not be any score reporting the EOS Tournament will be seeded by a blind draw.

## **6. Player Injury**

- a. An injured player who cannot continue will be allowed to leave the game. No out will be taken when that player's turn in the batting rotation is reached.
- b. A runner injured on the base paths can be replaced with the most recent batter in the line-up who is not on base.
- c. A player injured while batting can be replaced with the most recent batter in the line-up who is not on base – the pitch count will resume at the point the batter was injured.
- d. The injured player will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the half inning in which she was injured plus the next full inning. EXCEPTION: If the player leaves the game due to an illness or being over-heated, she will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the game.

**7. Uniforms** – Teams are required to wear uniforms of matching color that are individually numbered. The exception will be pull-ups who will wear their regular uniforms.

## **8. End of Season Tournament**

- a. Tournament format will be blind draw, single elimination bracket play.
- b. EOS Tournament will be governed by all the same rules of the regular season with the following exceptions:
  - i. The home team is decided by coin toss.
  - ii. Games are limited to 75 minutes but will be played until a winner is declared (can't end in a tie). Slaughter rule will apply: 11 runs after 4 innings (5 innings for 16U), 6 runs after 5 innings (6 innings for 16U).
  - iii. During the additional innings, the International Tiebreaker rule will be followed. The player who batted last at the end of the previous inning will start the additional inning as a runner on second base. The next regularly scheduled batter will be up to bat.
  - iv. The championship game will be played to completion - 7 innings for 16U, 6 innings for all others. Slaughter rule will apply: 11 runs after 4 innings (5 innings for 16U), 6 runs after 5 innings (6 innings for 16U). A two-hour time limit will be enforced at all age groups – no additional innings will begin after two hours of game time has elapsed. If at the end of the two hours and end of final inning the teams are tied, the International Tiebreaker rule described above will be followed for all additional innings until a winner is declared.

## **9. Umpires**

- a. Umpires are required to be at least 2 years older than the oldest age level for games that they officiate.
- b. Umpires are required to be at the field 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

## **10. Protests**

- a. Protests involving umpire judgment will not be heard and will automatically be dismissed.
- b. Protests made by a team that is ultimately victorious at the conclusion of the game will not be heard and will automatically be dismissed.
- c. Protests must be made known immediately (prior to the next pitch, if applicable) to the game umpire and opposing coach as to the nature of the protest. If the protest occurs at the conclusion of the game, the protesting coach must make every attempt to notify the opposing coach and one of the umpires prior to leaving the premises. The protest should be noted by each team and by the umpire including documentation of the game situation at that time (positions of runners on the field, number of outs, pitch count, etc.).
- d. The protesting coach must notify their league president of the protest within 24 hours of the conclusion of the game. Their league president will put the coach in contact with Bruce Frye, who will rule on all protests in a timely manner.
- e. If it is determined that there was an incorrect interpretation of a rule, whether a local rule or otherwise, the game shall be replayed from the point the incorrect ruling or play occurred without giving any consideration to what effect it may have had on the remainder of the game or the outcome of the game.
- f. All protest decisions will be final.
- g. Any game played using a non-sanctioned umpire is not subject to protest.

## **11. Lightning Rule**

If, during a game, lightning is sighted by an umpire or coach, regardless of the estimated distance, the umpire will immediately clear the field for a period of 20 minutes. (Time to be recorded in the scorebooks.) If lightning is sighted again during the delay, a new 20-minute waiting period begins. This process continues until a total delay of 30 minutes has occurred or play is resumed. Once a total delay of 30 minutes has occurred, games are suspended to a later date unless considered a complete game. At complexes with multiple fields, play will be stopped on all fields when lightning is sighted at any one field.

## 8U MACHINE PITCH

### Rules Supplement

1. The defense will consist of ten (10) players, to include four (4) outfielders as in the 10U and 12U divisions. The defensive pitcher will be placed to the right or left of the pitching machine with both feet inside the 8-foot circle around the pitching rubber.
2. The pitching machine will be placed at a distance of 35 ft from home plate and set at a speed of approximately 32 mph, as measured on a speed/radar gun as the ball crosses home plate. The machine should only be adjusted after a complete inning. The adjustment should be made with the batter moving up or moving back in the batter's box to hit the ball. If the ball comes in at an extreme, on the ground or really high, then the machine may be adjusted at that point.
3. An offensive coach will feed the balls into the pitching machine and the umpire will be stationed behind home plate. The coach feeding the machine will not be allowed to make any adjustment to the machine during the ½ inning unless directed to do so by an umpire. Under NO circumstances is the coach allowed to communicate verbally with the offensive players on the field. The coach may not leave the circle, or a conference will be charged. First violation = warning; repeat offender will not be allowed to feed the pitching machine for the remainder of the game. Note: The coach feeding the machine shall not make any motion to the batter on how to adjust them in the batter's box. This shall be the responsibility of the base coaches. A time out may NOT be called to adjust a batter in the batter's box. The only exception is for the safety of the batter. The "pitcher" may then motion only to back off the plate.
4. Since a player is not actually pitching at this age level there are no "pitching" limitations for anyone playing this defensive position.
5. If a batted ball hits the pitching machine or field umpire before coming into contact with any defensive player, the ball will be declared dead, and the batter will be awarded 1st base. Only if forced, will any base runner advance and if they are forced, they advance one base only. If a batted ball hits the offensive coach feeding the balls into the pitching machine, the same rule applies. Upon protest by a defensive coach, if the umpire believes that the offensive coach did not make a reasonable attempt to avoid contact with the ball, an out on the batter will be called. THIS IS AN UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT CALL.
6. If a thrown ball hits the pitching machine or field umpire, the ball will remain live unless the ball remains near the pitching machine and retrieving it would be a safety concern in the umpire's opinion. If that is the case, the umpire will call time and award bases as outlined in item "H" below.
7. There are no balls and strikes called in this division. Each batter will be given a maximum of five (5) pitches to try to hit the ball into play. If the ball has not been hit into play after 5 pitches, then the batter is out.  
EXCEPTIONS:
  - a. If the batter fouls off the fifth pitch, she will continue to receive pitches until she hits one fair or misses the pitch. A foul tip (pitch touches the bat and caught by the catcher) on the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch will result in an out.
  - b. If a ball is deemed un hittable BY THE UMPIRE (batter couldn't make contact with the ball because it was too high or bounced in front of the plate), then the pitch does not count as one of the 5 allowed.
8. Time will be called when the defense stops the lead, or the runners have abandoned their attempt to advance. Any runner who has not advanced more than the halfway point (30 ft) when time is called will return to the previous base. Getting the ball back to the pitcher in the circle DOES NOT stop play. THIS IS AN UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT CALL.
9. The rulebook will govern overthrows that go into a dead ball area (two (2) bases at the time of the throw). A batter may not advance any further than 3<sup>rd</sup> base on overthrows that remain in "live" territory. A runner already occupying the base may have the opportunity to score if the ball is overthrown and remains in "live" territory. Both the batter and the base runner(s) are subject to being put out or tagged out by the defensive team. An overthrow constitutes a throw being made on an actual play. Not a ball being thrown back to the pitcher. At that time, time should be called by the umpire.
10. There will be no fake bunting or slap hitting allowed in rookie. The batter is NOT allowed to show bunt, then draw back and take a full cut at the ball. Any batter that does this will be called out.
11. No defensive player may be positioned closer than 35 feet from home plate at the time of the pitch. The pitcher is required to have at least one entire foot within the pitcher's circle and be either beside or behind the pitching machine at the time of the pitch.
12. To assist with the flow of the game (and with agreement from both managers and the umpire), a defensive coach will be positioned at the backstop to assist the catcher in returning the pitched ball. Under NO circumstances is the

coach allowed to communicate either verbally or non-verbally with the defensive players on the field.

- 13.** 8U catcher is required to wear all gear when behind the plate. Should we have to change course of action due to COVID restrictions we will revert back to not having a catcher behind the plate UNLESS they have their own gear.
- 14.** For any rules or information not covered above please refer to the 8U Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Tournament Rules as posted online (the rulebook itself is incorrect).

**10U**  
Rules Supplement

1. Stealing of all bases will be allowed. The base runner must remain in contact with base until the pitch has been released.
2. The runner may steal on the release of the pitch.
3. Batters may not go to first on a dropped-third-strike.
4. 10U pitchers will be allowed to pitch only 10 innings in a rolling 7-day period, with a limit of 9 innings in any one day. One pitch thrown will constitute an inning pitched. During tournament play, the inning count resets at the start of the first game and there will be a 9 inning limit per 2 consecutive games.
5. **There will only be allowed three walks per half inning.** For purposes of this rule, a hit batter is not considered a walk. **After three batters have been walked by the same pitcher, if the pitcher should subsequently pitch four balls to another batter that inning, the offensive coach will come in to pitch as many pitches as there are strikes left in the count to that batter (batter must hit or strike out).** For example, if the count on the batter is 4-1 then the coach may throw 2 pitches. If the batter does not put the ball in play, the batter will be declared out regardless of the quality of the pitches. The offensive coach will continue to pitch to all subsequent batters for the remainder of the inning. All balls thrown by the offensive coach will be considered strikes, regardless of location relative to the standard strike zone. The coach pitching will pitch from the rubber and will make efforts to pitch a fast pitch (rather than a slow lob).
6. **Once the offensive coach comes into pitch, stealing of all bases will be stopped. Once a player comes back in to pitch (the next inning) stealing may resume.**
7. There is no in-field fly rule for 10U.

**12U and 16U**  
Rules Supplement

1. Stealing of all bases will be allowed. The base runner must remain in contact with base until the pitch has been released.
2. The runner may steal on the release of the pitch.
3. 12U pitchers will be allowed to pitch only 10 innings in a rolling 7-day period, with a limit of 9 innings in any one day. One pitch thrown will constitute an inning pitched. During tournament play, the inning count resets at the start of the first game and there will be a 9-inning limit per 2 consecutive games.
4. 16U pitching is unlimited.