

# 2022 MADISON GIRLS' SOFTBALL 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> GRADE LOCAL RULES-FINAL

## GENERAL

A game is 6 innings. Starting time must be confirmed with both coaches and umpire before First Pitch. Do not start a new inning after one hour and 45 minutes. Last inning must be confirmed with both coaches and umpire before first pitch thrown at top of inning. With bad weather and darkness, always consider the safety of your players FIRST. Each team supplies one game ball for each game.

If weather/darkness/time prevents you from completing a game, you have two options: 1) the head coaches from both teams may agree to accept the game as final with the score reverting to the score at the end of the previous complete inning. 2) You may agree to complete the game on a future date, continuing from the point of game stoppage. Both coaches should agree on a date and communicate to the Field Scheduler for scheduling. Mercy rule is 15 runs at the end of 3 full innings.

Winning coach is responsible to report game results via email to Player Agent [dcarver262@aol.com]. It is important to report results on a timely basis so that we can maintain standings and ensure rescheduled games are completed.

## BATTERS

Girls are required to wear batting helmets with a face mask at all times when at bat and on base. Helmets do not need to have chin strap. There is no "on deck" circle. Players should not pick up their bat until they walk to the batter's box. Practice swings in batter's box only. Do not throw bats. Batting order includes all players who attend game. Original batting order should only be changed if injury or early departure required. Bunting is allowed. In this division, if the pitched ball hits the ground first, it is a ball, and the batter is not considered "hit by the pitch". A batter hit by a pitched ball takes first base, no exceptions. The determination of whether the batter is hit by a pitch is only at the umpire's discretion.

## FIELDING

Infielders (pitcher, 1B, 2B, SS and 3B) are required to wear a fielder's mask during games and batting practices. Coaches are not allowed on the field when ball is in play except for situations with coach pitch (see below for more details on coach pitch). All Players should be taught to make eye contact before throwing ball to partner. No infield fly rule is in effect. Max of Ten (10) players on defense. All 4 Outfielders must have BOTH Feet on the grass (or at least 10 feet behind base path at MRC field) when the pitch is thrown. All players to play minimum of three innings on defense.

If the ball is out of play on an overthrow, all runners are awarded the base to which they were heading plus one base. On an overthrow to first base that remains in play, the runner may optionally advance to second base at their own risk but may not advance beyond 2<sup>nd</sup> base. All other plays end when the fielding team throws the ball to the pitcher and ball enters the pitching circle. The pitcher does not need to have control of the ball so play ends even if the pitcher fails to catch the throw.

## CATCHING

While our goal is to return to player catchers, we agreed there may be times where a coach needs to be the catcher. If a coach is handling the catcher's duties, they will only receive and return the pitch to the pitcher. They won't receive a throw from any fielder for a force or tag play at the plate, throw to any base to force an out or catch any fair/foul pop-ups.

## RUNNING

Runners en route to first base must run either on the foul line or in foul territory. Runners must slide or avoid contact at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and home. There is stealing of 3<sup>rd</sup> base only; with youth pitcher only. A runner may not advance on an errant throw on a pick-off attempt at 1st or 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Runners may only leave base (to take a lead) when the pitch passes home plate. Runners who leave early are out. One warning per team each game. A courtesy runner may be inserted for the Pitcher or Catcher at any time.

## PITCHING

Pitching distance is 35 feet from the back of home plate. Pitchers may not exceed THREE innings per game regardless of total innings played. Pitchers may leave the mound and return later in the game as long as their total pitching does not exceed three innings. One Pitch = One Inning. No dropped third strike rule in effect. The pitcher (player and/or coach) must have at least 1 foot in contact with the pitching plate when initiating the pitching motion and cannot take more than 2 steps before pitch release. Any pitcher who hits three batters in a game MUST be removed from the mound and will be ineligible to pitch for the remainder of that game.

There are no walks and an expanded strike zone (one softball width added to inside, outer, top and bottom edge of strike zone - but not above the shoulders or below the calves). A coach must enter to pitch to their own batter upon the opposing pitcher throwing four balls during the at bat. Please encourage girls to swing at any ball that is reasonably hittable. When a coach enters for coach pitch, the player/pitcher should be positioned to their side with at least one foot in pitching circle. Umpires may not handle wild pitches or passed balls that are in play. Pitching circle is circular area with an 8ft radius measured from pitcher's plate.

## SCORING

The five-run rule will be in effect except for the last inning. The five-run rule is as follows: the inning will end upon the offensive team making three outs, or after a play in which the offensive team has scored the fifth run of that inning. All runs scored on the final play of the inning will count. For example, if the play results in the fourth, fifth and sixth runs of the inning being scored, all runs will count and the offensive team would then take the field. There is no limit on runs in the last inning. Both coaches and Ump must confirm before the start of each inning (starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning) if that inning will be the FINAL inning of the game. At that time, the 5-run rule is suspended. This decision is irrevocable.