

**Cathy Stage Homer Recreation Youth Softball Program**  
**Local 12 and under Softball Rules and Guidelines**  
**March 5, 2015**

1. **Field Dimensions:** The distance between the bases is 60 feet. The base line is an imaginary line three feet to either side of the direct line of the bases. The distance from home plate to the pitcher's plate is 35 feet from the back tip of home plate. A Pitching circle is to be drawn around the pitcher's mound with a radius of 10 feet. Out of bounds lines will be parallel to the foul lines and will extend from the ends of the backstop. A line marking the mid-way point for each baseline will be drawn to aid the umpire in determining if a runner is allowed to take the next base. At all grass fields, a line will be drawn ten feet behind the first to second and second to third baselines (see rule #33). At fields where there are no on deck batter's cages, 2 circles with a diameter of 12 feet will be drawn behind the wings of the backstop.
2. The home team provides two 12 inch yellow covered red stitched balls for each home game.
3. **Innings:** 12 and under teams play 6 innings. Ten players play defense. All players on the team are put in the batting order to bat, whether or not they play in the field during that inning. Once set, the batting order remains the same throughout the game. Each player must play in the field 3 of the 6 innings. Exceptions: A player is not required to play 3 innings if they arrive late or leave early.
4. **Starting Time:** All scheduled games must begin at the scheduled starting time. The home team takes the field 30 minutes before the starting time for a 15 warm-up. The visiting team takes the field for 15 minutes before the starting time for a 15 minute warm-up. At the scheduled starting time, the umpire should call "Play Ball-Batter up". All offensive and defensive players will need to be ready for play within 5 minutes of the end of the previous inning. Weekday games are scheduled to start at 6:00 p.m. Saturday game start times depends upon when the fields are available in each township.
5. **Ending Time:** the top of an inning may not start after 8:15 p.m.
6. **Minimum Number of Players:** Eight players per team must be present at the start of a game. If eight players are not present within 10 minutes of the scheduled start of a game, a forfeit is declared. Any player arriving after the start of the game must be placed at the end of the batting order. If a player leaves early from a game, they are deleted from the batting order with no penalty to the team. A team may finish with less than 8 players on the field. If one team knows in advance that it will not be able to field a minimum of eight players for a game, the opposing team must show up with a minimum of eight players within ten minutes of the scheduled starting time in order for a forfeit to be declared. If neither team can field a minimum of eight players within the time limits, a double forfeit will be declared. In the forfeit scenario, both teams are encouraged to show at the field, share their players and play a scrimmage game.
7. **Shortened Games:** A regulation game shall consist of 6 innings. If a game is called by an umpire for darkness or weather conditions after 4 complete innings have been completed, the game will be considered official. If less than 4 complete innings have been completed, the game will be resumed from the point where it was called at a later date. Players that were not at the first game but are at the resumed game are added to the bottom of the lineup. Players that were at the first game but are not at the resumed games are skipped in the lineup with no penalty to that team.
8. **Rain Outs:** It is the responsibility of the Recreation Director to make the determination if a game can be played, based upon the weather and field conditions. In his absence, the game umpires may make this decision. If it is obvious that conditions are unplayable, an agreement to cancel the game can be made over the telephone by the two coaches and the Recreation Director. If a game is rained out, the Recreation Director will assign a makeup date by notifying both coaches within 24 hours of the canceled game start time. The Recreation Director will assign the first available makeup date. If the makeup date is not agreeable to one

of the coaches, the Recreation Director will accept an alternative date , if it is agreed upon by both coaches and the requested field is not already taken. The softball director must hear from both coaches that the agreed upon date is acceptable to both coaches.

9. **Infield Fly Rule:** The infield fly rule does not apply in this league.
10. **Strike Zone:** The strike zone will be from the knees to the shoulders of each batter.
11. **"Base on Balls", Stealing and Bunting:** A batter is awarded first base on four called balls, if they are hit by a pitched ball, or if they swing and hit the catcher's mitt since this is interference by the defense. A runner may leave the base on the pitcher's release of the ball (two steps). A wild throw by a catcher on a pick off attempt does allow the runner to steal the base including home. Batters are allowed to bunt.
12. **Ball in Play;** When a batter hits a fair ball, the ball is considered "in play" and runners may continue to advance until one of the following events occurs:
  - A. The defense makes a play and gets the third out, or
  - B. The ball is thrown out of bounds, in which case the umpire declares the ball dead and each runner will be awarded to bases from the point where they were at time of the throw was released, or
  - C. The umpire rules a ball "dead" because of interference or another rule, or
  - D. The ball is returned to the pitcher within the pitching circle. If the pitcher is "out of position", covering another player, she must return to the pitching circle and have possession of the ball to stop play.
  - E. The ball is hit to the outfield and thrown back into a base player. This will stop play unless the base player tries to make another play.
13. **Legal Touch:** A legal touch occurs when a runner who is not touching a base is touched by the ball while it is securely held in a fielder's hand(s). The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder after having touched the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s) of the fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the glove or hand(s) holding the ball. It is not a legal touch if the runner is touched with an empty hand or glove, even though the defensive player is holding the ball in the opposite hand or glove.
14. **Base Running and Interference:**
  - A. Defensive players are instructed by their coaches and the umpires, if necessary, as to the proper position to stand in relation to a base. They may not obstruct a runner advancing to another base.
  - B. A base runner is called "out" for running outside the base path when running to any base in regular or reverse order and runs outside the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a defensive player. A player will not be called "out" if they run outside the base path while trying to avoid a collision with a defensive player who is fielding a ball, in which case the runner should run behind the defensive player.
  - C. If a runner advancing to a base is hit by a batted ball, the runner is called "out".
  - D. If a base runner advancing to a base is hit by a thrown ball, the runner is not out, and the ball is alive and playable.
  - E. A runner who intentionally interferes with a defensive play will be declared out.
  - F. If the umpire is hit by a batted ball, it is considered a live ball. An umpire is considered part of the field of play.
  - G. A runner is out when they physically pass a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.
15. **Throwing the bat:** Throwing the bat constitutes an "out" declared by the umpire at the umpire's discretion. The play is dead and the base runners return to their original base. No warnings have to be given.
16. **Safety:** Batter, on deck batters, base runners and base coaches under the age of 18 must wear a helmet with a facemask and a chin strap at all times. For safety reasons, the only jewelry that is allowed to be worn are safety alert necklaces and bracelets which must be tucked inside the player's shirt and taped down. Starting

in 2002, by ASA rules, no other jewelry may be worn. Umpires have the right to request that any jewelry must be removed, before the player can resume playing. If a player is injured, the umpire can immediately stop the game and allow treatment of the injured player. First aid kits must be present in all equipment bags.

17. "Uniforms" constitute the same color shirt for the entire team. If it is cold, a jacket or sweatshirt should be worn under the team shirt, so the umpires can distinguish defensive from offensive players. Two extra shirts are issued for coaches. Players must wear the team shirt in order to play. The umpires wear light blue shirts and therefore it is requested that no team wear light blue shirts.
18. An inning will be ended by defensive team getting 3 outs or the offensive team scoring 5 runs. More than five runs can score in an inning, if the last batter drives in any or all runners on base including herself.
19. Sportsmanship: In keeping with our philosophy "Cathy Stage player are to play and have fun:", all players, coaches and spectators are encouraged to demonstrate good sportsmanship, especially in cheering and applauding for "good plays", no matter which team makes the play or gets the hit! It is up to the discretion of the umpires to speak to the coaches about their parents, team players' or their own display of unsportsmanship conduct. After the second warning, the game is stopped until the person responsible for the unsportsmanship behavior leaves the field. Refer to the Coaches', Players' and Spectator's code of conduct.
20. Request to reschedule games for non-weather reason: After the initial schedule has been published, there may be games scheduled on a day when something such as a school or girl scout function is taking place that the scheduler was unaware of. These games may be rescheduled if the Recreation Director is notified by both coaches by May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Recreation Director will accept an alternate date if it is agreed upon by both coaches and the requested field is available. The Recreation Director must hear from both coaches that the agreed upon date is acceptable to both coaches. The coaches do not have to suggest an alternate date in which case the Recreation Director will assign another date.
21. Coaches cannot touch runners until play is stopped; If touched, the runner is out.
22. Pitching: There are no restrictions on how many innings a pitcher can pitch in one game or in one week. However, coaches are encouraged to develop three or four pitchers and to develop a rotation to rest players every game. There are six rules that the umpires will be enforcing.
  - A. Pitching at 12 and under level must be of windmill technique. If the windmill technique is not used an illegal pitch dead ball will be called, after four illegal pitches the batter will get first base.
  - B. Both feet must start on the pitcher's plate, and hesitate for a moment.
  - C. The pitcher's shoulders must be in line with first and third bases.
  - D. There can be no step backward. The pitcher can lean backwards.
  - E. There can be no multiple steps forward.
  - F. There can be no double pump during the delivery.
  - G. The pitcher's hands must be apart when she steps on the pitcher's plate with the ball in either hand. During the motion the ball must go inside the glove.
  - H. The balk rule is not enforced at this level.The pitcher must step on the pitcher's plate with both feet and with her hands apart. She must hesitate for a second as if taking a sign from the catcher. She can then start the pitching motion. She must bring her hands together with the ball going inside the glove. If there is a question as to the appropriateness of a pitcher's delivery a coach can appeal to the Recreation Director. The Recreation Director will evaluate the pitcher's delivery and will inform both coaches and the umpires of his decision. He may decide that no change in the pitcher's motion need to be made for this game, but that one should be made before the player pitches the next time. Rolling the ball to the batter is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. The umpires will be instructed to call the first rolled ball a "ball" Any subsequent rolled balls will be called a "no pitch"

Other pitching reminders:

- A. During a pitcher's delivery, if the ball for any reason does not get to the plate it is a ball.
- B. A batter that is hit by a pitch that bounces is awarded first base providing she has made an attempt to get out of the way.
- C. A ball that bounces before or on the plate is a ball. A ball that bounces after it crosses the plate could be a strike, if it was in the strike zone when it crosses the plate.
- D. A batter that hits a pitch that bounces counts as a batted ball. If the batter swings and misses a ball that has bounced it is a strike. If the batter does not swing at a ball that has bounced, it is a ball.
- E. Any ball that hits the bat is a batted ball even if the batter has not swung.
- F. When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing, the batter will be awarded first base. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered part of the bat.

Exception: If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four. Note: If the batter is hit on the hands while swinging at the pitch and hits the ball fair or foul, the ball is dead and a strike is called.

If a pitcher has hit three batters in a game and the batter has been awarded first base, the pitcher has to be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. Exception: If the game is suspended, and resumed at a later date, the pitcher may resume pitching.

23. Length of Games: In an effort to have the games finish in less than two hours, the following guidelines are suggested:
- A. Courtesy runner for the catcher: At the coaches' option, after there are two outs and if the next inning's catcher is on base, they may be replaced with a courtesy runner which will be the last player to make an out.
  - B. Have your players know which positions they will be playing in the next inning, especially the catcher.
  - C. Please give special consideration to who you select for your catchers. If they do not catch the ball very often, it takes time to retrieve the ball from the backstop. It also forces the umpire to move out of the way, which makes for an inconsistent strike one.
  - D. Pitchers get a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches at the start of each inning or when a pitching change is made. Umpires do not have to grant warm-up pitches for the catchers if the pitcher has already thrown 5 warm-up pitches to the coach.
24. Talking to Umpires:
- A. By ASA Rules, only the Head Coach may talk to the umpire. We do allow the scorekeepers to ask ball/strike count, number of outs, etc.
  - B. There should be no threatening comments made to umpires before, during or at the end of games
  - C. A head coach can appeal a call based upon a rule not an umpire's judgment. If an umpire rules a certain way on a rule, that is the end of the appeal. You may appeal to the Umpire Director at the conclusion of the game. The game will not be replayed or resumed, however the intent is to get the rule correctly applied in the future.
25. Stealing:
- A. Stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases, but not home will be allowed at the 12 and under level.
  - B. No stealing on a walk or base on balls.
  - C. The runner can lead off a couple of steps with chest square to home plate once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, but not steal the base until the ball crosses home plate. Any shoulder turn toward the next base will be called out if the ball has not crossed home plate.
26. A coach can ask an umpire for interpretation if a batter is out of the batter's box. Once an interpretation has been made, the coaches should return to the bench.

27. If an umpire has not called time before a pitch has been delivered, whatever subsequently happens, is part of the game.
28. A protest of a game can be made for the following reasons
  - A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch or if the last play of the game before the umpires leave the field.
  - B. Ineligible player: **A PLAYER NOT REGISTERED IN THE PROGRAM**– can be made any time
29. There is no ASA rule that requires a runner to slide; however we do encourage the players to slide on close plays or give themselves up in the interest of safety. The only time a runner can be called out for not sliding is when a defensive player has the ball or is about to catch the ball, and the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player. The runner is out, the ball is dead and each runner must return to the last base touched. The umpire determines what “great force” is.
30.
  - A. When a pitcher has control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the umpire can signal dead ball, and the play will end. Any runners that not halfway to the next base, in the Umpire’s judgment, must go back to the last base touched. If the pitcher makes a play on a runner or to a base, the dead ball is waved off, and the play continues.
  - B. When a ball is hit to the outfield play will stop when the ball has been thrown to a base player and the base player has control of the ball. If a base player tries to make a play on a runner, play will resume.
31. If a game is tied after six innings, the teams can continue to play until the tie is resolved as long as time and weather conditions allow and it is not too dark. If a game is called after six innings, it is considered official, and the score will stand as is, win, lose or tie. The final score is determined by the last complete inning played.
32. For safety reasons, a catcher must be in squat position. They will no longer be allowed to be on their knees.
33.
  - A. On all grass fields, a line will be drawn 10 feet behind the first to second and second to third baselines. All three outfielders and the rover player must stand behind the line until the ball is hit.
  - B. At the fields where there are dirt infield, the three outfielders and rover player must stand on the outfield grass until the ball is hit.
34. Per the Recreation Commission, in the umpire’s judgment, if thunder is heard or lightning is seen, all participants must leave the field, and not return until 20 minutes after the last bolt of lightning is seen or clap of thunder is heard. If play resumes and is topped a second time, the game will be ended.
35. All on the field coaches that are under the age of 18 must wear a batter’s helmet with face mask and chin strap.
36. ASA Rules will apply in all situations unless they are superseded by local rules. This document is consider the local rules.