

# 2011 Athens Sandlot Softball Local Rules

## 11U & 12U Majors Softball Division- *Board Approved*

**General:** These are the regular season rules that have been agreed upon by the Athens Sandlot Baseball League Board. ASA rules shall be followed otherwise. ASBL is not affiliated with ASA.

**Age Guidelines:** A players division will be determined by the age of the player on or before January 1 of this year. An experienced 8 year old, currently in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, may request to play in the Majors Softball division. Players playing up a division may be eligible for that division's all-star team but not in the all-star team from her actual age division.

**Officials:** The umpire is in charge of the game, and will handle all appeals on the field. Only the head coach may address the umpire to resolve any questions. In the event the umpire cannot resolve a situation, the Softball Commissioner can be called upon to do so. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of his/her players, spectators, and coaches. Negative or antagonizing "chatter" is not allowed. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** The umpire may give a warning, but can, at any time, eject any coach, player, or spectator. Profanity is not tolerated and may result in immediate ejection from the park.

### I. Start & End of the Game:

A. Line up cards. Each coach shall prepare a team line up card to include:

Batting line up  
Starting pitcher  
Members of the team that may be arriving late and may play  
Coaches names. (No more than 4 coaches may be used during games.)

B. Pre-Game Warm ups, line ups, line up cards and protocol:

20 minutes prior to the start time: Visitor team warm ups  
10 minutes prior to the start time: Home team warm ups  
5 minutes prior to the start time: Line up cards delivered to the chief umpire.  
Failure to finish a team warm up is not an excuse to delay the on-time start the game.  
On-field pre-game warm-ups may be altered or disallowed due to games running behind schedule, weather or darkness.  
First pitch: Official start time shall be called by the umpire.

C. If a team cannot field 8 players within 10 minutes of the scheduled start of the game, the ASBL Board has determined this team shall forfeit the game. A team may play with 8 players and the opposing team shall supply a defensive player that is deep in the batting order for that inning, (or from the bench when possible) to fill in the 9th position (outfield), so the game may be played. This "loaned" player will still bat for his/her team. A forfeit game may be played with less than 8 players, however, the score will not count, and the only item that will be recorded in the official score book will be "innings pitched."

D. The City of Athens will notify ASBL if the field is not available for use because of field conditions. If the City has approved the field for use but the weather or field conditions are poor, the team coaches must both agree the field is acceptable. Once the game is turned over to the Chief Umpire, only the Chief Umpire may end a game for weather, darkness or time.

E. Games will be 6 innings. Ties will be resolved in extra innings. A game is official after 4 complete innings (3½ if home team is winning).

F. No new inning shall begin after 1 hour, 25 minutes from the official start time of the game, or within 20 minutes of sunset. Sunset times will be posted weekly.

G. There is a 2-1/2 hour time limit on any game that does not interfere with another "game".

## I. Start & End of the Game: cont.

H. Mercy Rule: A 10 run differential **anytime** after 4 completed innings (3 ½ if the home team is ahead). The game is declared complete, the leading team is awarded a win, and the only item that will be recorded in the official score book from this point on will be “innings pitched”. At this time the defensive team will insert any players that haven’t fulfilled their minimum playing time. The offensive team must insert all players that have not batted, and they will bat, in succession, until each player has batted. Once this has been achieved, teams will switch offense/defense and likewise fulfill the minimum playing requirements.

## II. Scorekeeping:

- A. The home team shall be responsible for keeping the official score book. First pitch time shall be noted as called by the umpire.
- B. The official scorekeeper is to record the names of the umpires.
- C. All score books are to include the record of all pitchers and the number of innings pitched.
- D. Both teams are to confirm the score at the end of each half inning with the umpire.
- E. The umpire will turn in the Game Summary Sheet to the concession stand after the game. The umpire and both coaches must sign the summary sheet.

## III. Pitching:

- A. The umpire shall issue a warning to any pitcher and the coaches of both teams if the pitcher hits 2 batters in one inning. Coaches shall notify the Chief Umpire if they have such a concern. Hitting three batters in one inning or after hitting four batters in the game, or if in the opinion of the Chief Umpire the pitcher does not have adequate control, the pitcher may be removed even if it means more than 5 pitchers will be used in the game.
- B. Pitcher Limits: **Maximum 3 innings total per game, not to exceed 6 innings total per day when playing doubleheaders.** Any appearance in an inning counts as an entire inning, whether it’s one pitch or 3 outs. Scorekeepers shall notify the Chief Umpire of any pitch limits being exceeded and the **Chief Umpire shall notify the Softball Commissioner of any suspected abuses of this rule.**
- C. A pitcher can re-enter once during a game, unless they have already pitched the maximum number of innings.
- D. The “windmill” style of pitch is preferred but the “slingshot” style is allowed.
- E. Both feet must be in contact with the pitchers’ plate at the start of the pitch.
- F. No backward step is allowed, but the pitcher may shift her weight backward.
- G. Balks: There will be no penalty for a balk, the pitch will not count. The pitcher should be made aware of the infraction and correct it.
- H. 11U will pitch from 35’ and use an 11” ball, 12U from 40’ with a 12’ ball.
- J. Pitchers (starters and replacements) will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches per inning.
- K. Walk Rule: A hit batter will be the only “walk” permitted. (batter must attempt to avoid the pitch). When a batter reaches 4 “balls”, the batters’ coach or designee will pitch. Regardless of the count at that time, the batter will inherit a 2 strike count. The batter will continue to bat until the ball is hit into play or strikes out.

**III. Pitching: cont.****K. Walk Rule: cont.**

- The coach pitcher must have one foot in the pitchers' circle while pitching, and avoid interfering by kneeling during infield plays, and leaving the field along the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline on balls hit to the outfield.
- If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher, it is foul.
- If a thrown ball hits the coach pitcher it is dead.
- No bunting or stealing is permitted when the coach pitcher is pitching.

**IV. Batting:**

- A. The ASBL Board has ruled all players present and eligible shall get at least 1 at bat per game and teams will utilize a continuous batting order.
- B. The ASBL Board has determined the strike zone to be at least one ball width wider and taller than the NLL strike zone in order to encourage batters to swing at hittable pitches. In general this means any pitch from the shoulders to the knees and one ball width on either side of the plate will be called a strike.
- C. Run Rule:
  1. Innings 1-4 have a "5" run limit per inning per team. No player may bat after 5 runs have **scored** in an inning.
  2. Innings 5 & 6, or if time constraints determine inning 3 or 4 will be the last inning of the game, each team may score unlimited runs until 3 outs are obtained.  
*Note- Mercy Rule applies, see I. G.*
- D. Bunting is permitted. *Except when rule III. K applies.*
- E. Batter **may** advance on a "dropped" 3<sup>rd</sup> strike, but only if 1<sup>st</sup> base is unoccupied prior to the pitch.

**V. Fielding:**

- A. Maximum of 10 players are allowed on the field on defense. Only six players are allowed in the infield. The outfielders must play at least 15 feet in the outfield grass.
- B. The Athens Sandlot Board has determined that minimum defensive play for each player shall be six (6) defensive outs per six inning game. Compliance with this local rule is on an honor system only. **HOWEVER**, managers suspected of not complying will be closely scrutinized and if found delinquent shall be subject to discipline by the Board, which may include forfeiture of subject game(s).
- C. Each team shall assign a coach to insure the catcher is ready at the end of the inning with a mask/helmet and catchers glove and be ready to take the field. If there are 2 outs and the catcher is on base, you should use a bench player, if available, or the last player that made an out, as a pinch runner, in order to get the catcher ready.
- D. The infield fly rule is in effect. A fair fly ball that could be caught with **ordinary effort** by an infielder when 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases are occupied with less than 2 outs. The batter is out, but base runners may advance at their own risk.

**VI. Running:**

- A. Stealing **will be allowed**, but only when a **player** is pitching. Stealing is **not allowed** when a coach or designee is pitching. A dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike situation is not considered a steal and therefore **is allowed** against any pitcher.
- B. Runners may advance to another base, at their own risk, on any overthrows.
- C. During a play initiated by a batted ball, the play is over when **forward progress** stops, and no further advance of any runner is allowed once the defensive team controls the ball in front of the lead runner and forces the runner at (or to retreat to) an unoccupied base. Runners must occupy a base when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitchers' circle. **Forward progress** is a judgment call by the umpire.
- D. **Slide or Avoid Rule:** On any play on a runner at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or home, for the purpose of avoiding collisions, **the runner must slide or otherwise avoid contact with the fielder**. Any collisions will result in the runner being called out and the ball will be dead.
- E. If there are 2 outs and the catcher is on base, you should use the last player that made an out as a pinch runner in order to get the catcher ready.
- F. In the event of an injury, the ball is dead; the runners receive the base they are headed to.

**VII. Substitutions:**

Coaches shall notify the Chief Umpire of:

- All pitcher changes
- Arrival of late players who will be put entered into the line up (end of line up only).
- Any injured or sick player that is being removed from the line up.

**VIII. Home Team:**

- A. The schedule will determine home team and the home team shall occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout.
- B. The home team shall drag the playing field and fill in any divots around the pitchers rubber, bases, etc., after the game as well as remove and or replace any rain tarps for the pitcher's mound and home plate areas.

**IX. Uniforms/Equipment:**

- A. A heart guard must be worn by the pitcher.
- B. Complete uniforms must be worn, as supplied by Athens Sandlot Baseball. Hats must be worn facing forward; shirts must be tucked in. No modifications of uniforms are allowed- example: cutting off sleeves, adding names, etc.
- C. Coaches will wear Sandlot League shirts.