

# 2009 Rookie Softball Rules

## **PTE Little League Objective**

PTE Little League's objective is to enrich our children by providing them with the positive experience of teamwork, personal achievement, and excellence through participation in our baseball and softball programs.

## **Rookie Softball League Objectives**

The focus of the Rookie League is to have fun, teach team sportsmanship and build upon the skills introduced during T-Ball and the Farm League by introducing advance softball skills appropriate for above beginner level softball players ages 7 and 8 years old. The areas of focus include:

- **Softball Field** - Review different bases and player positions in both infield and outfield and introduce the catcher position. Include review of fair, foul ball, and running within the baseline.
- **Hitting** - Reinforce proper grip, stance, swing, and proper technique for hitting. Advance skills include hitting, coach/player pitch focusing on the ball, weight shifting (rather than stride - current instruction is moving away from striding to the pitch). Introduce pitch count and strike zone. Emphasize the importance of hitting off the T and soft toss drills.
- **Throwing** - Pointing glove in direction of throw, step forward, throw, and follow through. Work on developing arm strength and accuracy as season progresses.
- **Infielders** - Reinforce the proper fielding technique - player keeps the ball in front of them, glove on the ground, bending at the knees and catching the ball with two hands. Teach down and ready when pitcher in motion. Teach concept of charging the ball and fielding a ground ball backhanded when necessary. Focus on throwing to first and introduce concepts of tag vs. forced outs. Teach catching infield popups with two hands.
- **Outfielders** - Focus on proper fielding techniques include catching fly balls, fielding on base hit by kneeling on one knee to block ball, running sideways rather than backwards, charging and scooping ball. Introduce backing up outfielders and hitting the cut-off man, throwing to second base or third base. Teach catching outfield popups with two hands.
- **Catcher** - Introduce proper catching stance, glove location, catching and blocking ball with body by falling on knees from catcher position. Introduce setting proper target for pitcher. Teach getting up out of catching position and fielding soft grounders around the plate (either throwing to first or touching the plate for a force out)
- **Base Running** - Reinforce running hard to and through first base at contact with ball. On base hit to outfield teach rounding first while watching the ball to advance. Hit inside corner of base when advancing to next base. Make sure each base is touched and stay in the baseline. Teach not to overrun second and third base. On a base hit to outfield with a runner on first, teach looking at the 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach to possibly advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. If runner is on 2<sup>nd</sup>, teach watching third base coach on a hit to the outfield to possible be sent home. Introduce concept of tagging up. (See Rookie Rules for exception: Player can only tag-up when on first or second base and advance only one base. No tagging up from third to home.) Teach proper technique for sliding.

- **Pitching** - If pitching for softball is approved, a special clinic will be run by PTLLE to certify players to pitch. In addition, coaches will be required to participate in a one-hour session prior to the start of practice to reinforce pitching concepts taught during the clinic. **Note:** For practice plans and additional information, refer to the link "Softball Basics Manual" on the Coaches Corner section of the PTLLE web-site ([www.parsippanybaseball.com](http://www.parsippanybaseball.com)).

## **GENERAL RULES**

- All players will be, as designated by Little League, ages 7 and 8 years old.
- Each game is played for six innings or two-hour limit, whichever comes first.
- Home team provides game ball and sits in the first base dugout.
- Game and practice balls are provided by the league. New balls are used for real games, used balls for practice. Little League approved softballs (11") will be used for Rookie League.
- Each inning will consist of three outs or a maximum of three runs per inning, whichever comes first. The inning will change after three outs or three runs. This limitation on runs should allow for all players to get a minimum of three at bats per game and keep the game moving. Exception to this rule is in the last inning. Team is retired after three outs or all players have batted.
- A maximum of 12 players per team (10 softball players on field and try to leave 2 on bench together).

## **FIELDING RULES**

- Ten players allowed on field (FYI - Only nine players are allowed in actual tournament regulation play).
- All infielders must play regular position - 1st Base, 2nd base, Shortstop, and 3rd base, softball outfield can play (LF, LC, RF, RC or LF, CF, RF and Short field). Only one player per position.
- During coach pitch one player allowed on pitchers mound. Pitcher must remain in spot until ball is hit. During player pitch only pitcher allowed on mound.
- Each player must play at least two innings in the infield, free substitutions should make it highly unlikely that this requirement can not be filled. However, if for some reason, time does not permit this, the player(s) whose field time is not filled will start the next game and fill the last game's requirements and remain on the field until all the time requirements are met for the last and current games.
- All outfielders must play no closer than 15 feet from the infield or any base.
- Please use your judgment regarding player's skill level whenever assigning a position to them.

## **Pitching Rules**

- The first half of the season will be all coach pitch.
- During first three weeks of coach's pitch, each player shall be allowed five swings or seven pitches. A maximum of 7 pitches per batter is permitted. To keep the game moving, a player will use a T to hit if after five swings or 7 pitches no contact is made.

During the remainder of the season when coach's pitch, each player shall be allowed five swings or seven pitches. A player will be considered struck out if they swing and miss 5 times or don't put the ball in play after 7 pitches. Pitching distance for players and coaches is 35 feet.

- During coach pitch, the team manager or coach pitches to their team using the sling shot motion while standing.
- The last half of the season will be players pitch first three innings, if there is a pitcher available, otherwise the coach can pitch the whole game. If there is a pitcher, the coach will pitch the final three innings. During players pitch, regular softball rules apply regarding strikes and balls with the following exceptions:
  - No continuation play.
  - No walks.
  - A maximum of seven pitches or five strikes and the batter is out.
  - A maximum of four fouls per batter are allowed when players pitch, 4 fouls will constitute an out. This will minimize game time.
  - Rules for coach pitch will be the same as above.
  - Player pitches to opposing team. Coaches pitch to same team.
  - All pitchers age 7 and 8 must attend a pitching clinic and must be certified to pitch by the designated Par-Troy Little League East Representative(s).
  - All players can only pitch a maximum three innings. However, coaches are strongly encouraged to use all certified pitchers equally on a weekly basis.
  - Pitchers are to pitch in accordance with Little League rules for Minor Division. See Official rule book for 2009.
  - If a pitcher hits two batters in an inning they must be removed. If they hit more than three batters (i.e., 1 per inning) they must be removed.
  - Coaches will umpire games.

## **HITTING RULES**

- One batting order per game and all players bat. Batting order should be rotated every game so that a player bats in a different place every game until they have batted in every spot. Then start the process over.
- There is no "On Deck Circle". Only current batter at the plate should be swinging a bat.
- No stealing. If a runner leaves the base early on a hit, the coach/umpire needs to explain to the player the leave early rule and that runner will only receive one base even if two bases are advanced. In softball you are OUT if you leave early. In Rookies, they will NOT be called OUT but the rule must be addressed.
- Outs will be recorded. If a batter gets thrown out he or she will go back to the bench.
- On a base hit the batter may keep advancing until the ball is fielded cleanly. Once the ball is fielded, the batter/runner should stop at the base he was advancing to.
- Sliding is permitted, but only to extent permitted by Little League - no head first sliding at this level.
- Tagging up is permitted only on first and second base. Base runner can advance only one base. No tagging up from third to home.
- Obstruction and Interference will not be called since this is a learning environment. However, if coaches see these situations, they should use them as opportunities to teach the players.

## **Coaching**

- Coaches can keep score for their own team and let the players know how many runs they have scored. There are no winners or losers. Emphasis is on skill building, having fun and camaraderie.
- Each team should have one manager and at least two assistant coaches. Managers, should recruit parents to become certified to be available to coach during games. See PTLLE web site for information regarding certification.
- During a game, only two coaches per team are allowed on the field (defense - coaches on field, offense - coaches on bases). If not enough coaches, at least one coach should be at first base and the bench. No player can coach first or third.
- A coach or certified parent should stand behind the catcher helping with passed balls. This will keep the game moving.
- During pre-season, each manager is responsible for conducting practices with a recommendation of two per week. During season, it is up to the discretion of the coach. All coaches do not need to be present at practice.
- Upon completion of the game, coaches from both teams must rake the field and ascertain that the garbage has been picked up by the players in and around the field of play. Ask parents for assistance to rake field and keep the fields clean.