

LNLLS Softball Rules – Points Of Emphasis

Revised March 2011

The prime intent of the program is to teach children the fundamentals of the game of softball - while having a good time and maintaining control of the game.

A Level

- You can be provided a batting tee. Please use it, along with soft toss and live pitching, at your practices throughout the year. Encourage individual girls to hit off of the tee during games if they cannot consistently hit the ball after 6 live pitches, especially at the beginning of the season.
- All baserunning should be “station-to-station”. All runners can be deemed safe, even on a putout.
- Place two pitchers on the field, one on each side just in front of the pitching rubber. Coaches from the batting team pitch. The defensive team may have up to two coaches in the field to help.
- Rotate the positions of the players in the field every inning, fairly.
- All players get to bat each inning, then teams switch sides.
- **There is NO score kept at A Level. Have fun!!**

AA Level

- Girls should be positioned on the field in natural softball positions. Four infielders, a short center fielder (on second base), one pitcher (or pitcher spot) and one catcher. Additional players may be added in the outfield. Please do not put additional girls in the infield or next to the pitchers mound.
- There should be a pitcher’s rubber on Schleien Field at a distance of approximately 25 feet. Girls **MUST** pitch from this spot. It’s simply unsafe to have the pitcher too close to the batter.
- Girls can start to pitch after the mid-season manager’s meeting. No more than 3 or 4 pitches per batter before a coach steps in to pitch to finish the at bat. After 6 swinging strikes by the batter at pitches thrown by a coach, that batter shall be out by strikeout. Only one coach in the field at AA Level.
- The defensive team must use a catcher wearing the protective gear well behind home plate. A coach from the team at bat stands behind the catcher to help retrieve pitches quickly back to the pitcher.
- Putouts made in the field are outs and result in the runner returning to the dugout. The at-bat ends when 3 outs or made or 6 runs are scored in a half-inning.
- Rotate the positions of the players in the field every inning, fairly.
- **There is NO score kept at AA Level. Have fun!!**

B Level

- The play is dead once an infielder has possession of the ball in the infield
- An overthrow is defined as any throw which crosses into foul territory or goes into the outfield. On an overthrow to a base all runners may try to advance one base but it shall not be automatic. No more than one overthrow per play, no matter where the ball is then thrown. Once the player has successfully advanced one base, the play is over and time is out until the next pitch.
- **Coaches should NOT encourage runners to try to take bases that they would not be able to take safely if the play was properly made.** For example: a ground ball is caught and then thrown by the pitcher to the first baseman, who bobbles and drops the ball at her feet enabling the batter to be safe at first base. The runner should not take off for second base (likewise, a runner on second base should not take off for third) just because the ball was dropped a couple of feet from the first baseman, simply because it’s difficult for girls at this level to then make the accurate throw to second base, catch it and tag the runner out. Unnecessarily aggressive baserunning is NOT in the desired spirit of the game at this level. If the ball were to roll 7 to 8 feet or more from the player fielding the base, then a runner could consider advancing, especially if the ball rolls in foul territory.
- **A ball thrown in from the outfield that does not get caught by an infielder is considered a live ball until it is in the hands of an infielder in the infield – not an overthrow.** When a runner is attempting to advance on an overthrow, she is at risk of being put out, even if she ran when she is not entitled to the base by our rules.
- A runner must be off the previous base and headed toward the next base by the time an infielder has possession of the ball in the infield in order to have the right to try to reach the next base.

B Level (con't)

- **Pitching Rules** :

- Each pitcher can pitch no more than 3 innings during a 6 inning game. (that is, teams may use only two pitchers in a game if they wish). These 3 innings can be pitched in any order. A pitcher may pitch a 4th inning only in the event of extra innings, but not more than four (any pitcher can re-enter to pitch in extra innings). We still encourage coaches to give many kids a taste of pitching throughout the season when possible.
- We now will have **5 Balls** (not 6) and 3 strikes per batter.
- Strike zone = Height: from “chin to (top of the) shin”; Width: home plate plus one ball-width on either side

C Level

- **Pitching Rules** :

- Each pitcher can pitch no more than 3 innings during a 6 inning game. (that is, teams may use only two pitchers in a game if they wish). These 3 innings can be pitched in any order. A pitcher may pitch a 4th inning only in the event of extra innings, but not more than four (any pitcher can re-enter to pitch in extra innings).
- C Level has 4 Balls and 3 Strikes per batter.
- Strike zone = traditional, from shoulders to knees, ball over home plate.
- Similar baserunning rules apply as in B Level, except that (1) on an overthrow into fair territory, runners can try for all the bases she can get; in foul territory it is only one base, and (2) runners can be a little more aggressive and follow the letter of the rules at C Level (however, runners can NOT advance if an infield play is made without an error)
- Bunting IS ALLOWED at C Level now

D Level

- Games are 7 innings long
- **Pitching Rules** : One pitcher can pitch up to 4 innings during a 7 inning game. (that is, teams may use only two pitchers in a game if they wish). **A pitcher may not pitch a 3rd inning until at least the 5th inning, and may pitch her 4th inning in the 7th inning only. So she may pitch 4 in a row if it is 4,5,6,7.**
- The play is dead once the pitcher has possession of the ball while in the pitchers circle.
- Bunting and leading is permitted, once the pitch crosses the plate.
- Stealing 2nd base allowed with two outs. Stealing 3rd base or Home allowed at any time. Runners cannot leave their base until after the pitch crosses the plate. No advances allowed on overthrows by a catcher.
- If a runner attempts to advance in a situation where it is illegal to do so, they may be put out. If they are not put out, they must go back to the base they came from. No delayed steals.
- Dropped 3rd strike rule in effect (w/ less than 2 outs and no runner at 1st, or 2 outs regardless of baserunners)

At B, C & D Levels

- A batter is awarded 1st base when hit by a pitch if she, in the opinion of the umpire, made an attempt to avoid being hit. A slow rolled/bounded pitch (usually B Level) will usually NOT result in the batter being awarded the base. A hard thrown ball that skips and hits the batter's feet probably WOULD result in the batter getting the base. It's the umpire's judgment and NOT subject to protest.
- Upon the 2nd batter hit by a pitch in an inning, the pitcher must be removed for that inning (counts as a full inning pitched). Upon the 3rd batter hit by a pitch in a game the pitcher is removed for the game.
- There will be a maximum of 6 runs scored per ½ inning. If a team is behind by more than 6 runs after 5 innings or by more than 12 runs after 4 innings, the game is over. (add an inning for D Level)
- No inning shall be started after 10 minutes before the hour that the game is scheduled to end. The horn will sound at 5 minutes to the hour. All games except the last weekend game played on that field will end when the horn sounds. In the case of the last weekend game played, the inning currently underway must be played to completion (or until the home team wins).
- Teams must have at least 7 players by the beginning of the bottom of the 1st inning and every inning thereafter to avoid a forfeit. See Call-Up rules on the website rules section for details about call-ups at D level. These same rules will apply to C level during allowable call-up periods. During the playoffs, a team must have at least 8 players on the field to start and throughout the game to avoid a forfeit.
- At B and C Levels, after a player plays in the outfield, her next position in the field must be infield. Also, no player shall sit out of the field for a second inning until everyone else has sat out once. During the regular season a coach (not a spectator) can keep written track of the opposing team's outfielders each inning, if they wish. During the playoffs, the umpire will keep track on paper of each team's outfielders each inning. The first offense will result in an out, the second will result in the ejection of the manager.