

FAIRFIELD LITTLE LEAGUE GIRLS SOFTBALL

"A" BALL GUIDELINES

Listed below are some guidelines to use during A Ball girls softball games/practices this season. The most important goal this season is to teach the game of softball to the new players and to review the game rules with the returning players.

In order to accomplish this goal, all of the Managers (and coaches), need to be consistent with what we are teaching, while also ensuring a safe and learning environment during a game.

Field Set Up

- 1. Ensure that both the infield & the outfield are clear of debris and safe to play on.**
- 2. Place the bases out in the infield. Home plate should already be in place on most fields. If the bases do not have a designated hole or marking for their placement, walk off sixty (60) feet in between all four bases for proper positioning.**
- 3. Since this is coach pitch, no need to set up the pitcher's mound other than walk off thirty-five (35) feet from home plate to pitch from (coaches discretion to move closer).**
- 4. If time allows and conditions warrant it, rake the batter's box and infield playing surface. A drag net should be located inside field box located behind the batting cage.**

Equipment

- 1. All players should wear their issued team uniforms every game. In cold weather, sweatshirts can be worn over the t-shirts and sweat pants can be worn instead of the issued shorts.**
- 2. All batting helmets should be certified and authorized for Little League Girls Softball use. They should not have any cracks or damaged parts. They should also have a full face cage and a chin strap.**
- 3. All softball bats should be certified and authorized for Little League Girls Softball use.**

Start the Game

Warm ups should be done before the start of scheduled game (or practice) - utilize about 10-15 minutes or so for warm ups and stretching.

We have allotted two hours for a combined practice/game on weekends. The first hour should consist of a practice (each team taking the infield for half the time). The second hour should be the game. The girls should be able to play at least three full innings.

A. AT BAT

- 1. A batting order should be established at the beginning of the game. This can be by uniform number or by the player's names. It is important however to mix up the batting order after every inning. This is done so the same players are not always batting first and the same players are not always batting last. Again, this can be done by going by names alphabetically or by their numbers (high to low, then low to high, middle to high, middle to low, etc.)**
- 2. The only player who should have a bat in their hands is the player who is at home plate waiting to be pitched to by a coach. No other players should have a bat in their hands and no players should be pitching to any batter during a game.**
- 3. A player should be allowed to swing at least six pitches from the coach. After six pitches the "T" should be brought out to assist the batter. Use your best judgment with this, if there are some "foul tips", more pitches can be utilized.**
- 4. There should be no "leading off" the bases by players who have successfully reached a base and there should be no stealing a base after a pitch is thrown.**
- 5. No base runners should advance to an additional base on an errant throw.**
- 6. All players bat in every inning of play whether they are in the field or sitting out. If a player is injured or feels sick during her at bat, she can be skipped until she feels she can return.**
- 7. The inning will end when the last batter of the team has had an opportunity to bat. Again, this rule can be adjusted to play a three out inning as the season progresses but both managers should be in agreement prior to the start of the game.**

B. IN THE FIELD

- 1. All of the infield positions should be covered to include the pitcher (slightly behind the coach pitcher but with a full view of the batter) and the catcher with full equipment (catcher's mask, chest protector and shin guards). A coach should back up the catcher to help with passed balls. Any combination of the respective team coaches can be utilized for both of the coach positions.**
- 2. We should utilize four outfielders (left field, left center, right center and right field. Outfielders MUST be positioned on the grass portion of the field and not in the infield.**
- 3. Every player should play at least one inning in both the outfield and the infield.**
- 4. All players should have the opportunity to play all of the positions throughout the season.**
- 5. Besides the pitcher (coach from hitting team) and the backup catcher (coach from hitting team) one additional coach (fielding team) should be utilized in the field to assist the players with instruction.**

I know some of the above guidelines seem “elementary” to most but we should all be clear on how we should present the game to the players to ensure a safe and educational environment on the field. At any time if a coach sees something unsafe or wants to point something out that both teams should be aware of, that coach should ask to stop the game and point out the observation.

If anyone knows of anything else we can do to help improve the girls learning and having fun please email your ideas for all of us to review and utilize (heary20@gmail.com).