**HSA Park Rules and Clarifications 2016 Girls 8 & Under League**

### Recreational League rules will be enforced unless specifically addressed otherwise herein.

**Pitching and Pitching Distance:**

Coaches will pitch from the rubber at 35 ft. Players will pitch from 30 ft.

Circle player is required to wear face and heart guard for player safety. (An approved player batting face guard is acceptable.)

Player Pitch will be implemented from the midpoint of the season and continue through the last regular season game. The end of the season pool play and tournament will be coach pitch only.

## Spring 2016 Player Pitch: 6 games Begins – 4/18/16

**Ends – 5/7/16**

**Player Pitch – Spring:**

During the 2nd and 3rd innings of each game, a player (not the coach) will pitch from the 30’ rubber and pitch to a minimum of three batters. The umpire will call balls, strikes, and hit batters during player pitch. The batters count will start with 1 ball and 0 strikes. This is done for 2 reasons; 1st to encourage the batter to put the ball in play, 2nd to speed up the game during player pitch. The player can continue to pitch till the following occur: 3 walks are issued, 3 outs are recorded or defensive coach makes a notion to relieve pitcher after facing minimum of 3 batters, whichever occurs first.

Note: In extra innings the coach-pitcher will be used not the player pitcher

## Strike Zone Player Pitch:

### The strike zone is when a pitched ball crosses any part of the plate in width and crosses anywhere from the batter’s ankles to her shoulders.

A defensive coach shall stand behind the umpire and catcher to retrieve pass pitched balls and return to the pitcher as quickly as possible in an effort to speed up the time of play. The defensive coach is not allowed to coach while in this position.

There are no pitching regulations enforced on the player pitcher (i.e., crow hop, leaping, double clutching, etc.).

No stealing of bases on a passed ball.

### Each player pitcher will pitch one complete inning. A full inning for player pitch is defined as facing three batters. Each team is required to pitch 2 pitchers per game.

**In the event there are not 2 available player pitchers on a team then the coach will inform the league commissioner to discuss options.**

**Player Pitch – Fall:**

During the Fall Ball season there will be no girl pitch during games. The intent of this rule is to provide a fun atmosphere of the Fall Ball season for all players while developing offensive and defensive skills.

## Coach Pitch – Spring and Fall:

An offensive coach (or designee) will pitch to the hitting team. The ball shall be pitched on a **FLAT trajectory** simulating a fast pitched softball and shall NOT be thrown or lobbed on an arc to the batter. During coach pitch, each batter is allowed 5 pitches in which to put the ball in play. The batter is allowed three (3) traditional “swinging” strikes (swing & miss, foul ball, etc.) A miss on a 3rd swing attempt constitutes a strikeout. A fouled fifth pitch is considered a foul and the batter is allowed another pitch. A batter is called out if after the fifth pitch the batter does not make contact with the ball fair or foul.

If a batted ball hits the Coach-Pitcher (not the defensive player in the circle) the ball is dead; there is no charged pitch and the play is repeated. The batter will assume the previous pitch count. The Coach- Pitcher must make an effort to keep from being hit by the ball or otherwise interfering with a play on a batted ball. Once the ball is in play the Coach-Pitcher should exit the field of play as quickly as possible without interfering with the current play or players. If no effort is made in the judgment of the umpire, the batter is called out and the coach will be warned or ejected if the lack of effort or action by the coach was deemed by the umpire to be flagrant.

## Defensive Rules:

All players will play in the field. Because there may be several extra girls in the outfield no outfielder can stand closer than 10 feet from the infield baseline. Thus Infielders play inside the grass and Outfielders play in the grass (Umpire’s judgment). No defensive player can play closer than 15 feet in front of third and first base.

Three (3) Defensive coaches are allowed on the field (max), one behind 1st base and one behind 3rd base and a third defensive coach will be permitted to stand in front of his/her respective dugout. Defensive coaches must respect the area of base coaches, thus the defensive coaches must remain in the grass in line with the outfielder.

The defensive circle player must have both feet inside the circle when the ball is pitched. The defensive coach may move the circle player behind second base for **safety reasons**. The intent of this rule is for player safety not for defensive advantage. If so, the player must remain at least 10 feet behind second base and be within 10 feet of either side until the ball is put into play.

After fielding a batted ball in or near the circle, the circle player cannot tag or run anyone out, unless it is a natural move of the game. *Obstruction will be called if this occurs*. The ball must be thrown to the respective base for an out to occur. Example, the circle player may run a player out on a ball fielded up the first or third baseline (umpire’s judgment call).

## Catcher Position:

Every team will be required to field a catcher while on defense when the team is fielding 9 or more players. If a team is only playing in the field with 8 players, a catcher can be one of the positions but is not required.

1. Catcher may be positioned anywhere from the catcher’s box to the back stop screen.
2. Catcher MUST wear an approved catcher's mask/ helmet, and chest protector, shin guards.
3. Catcher cannot block home plate unless she has the ball or is attempting to catch the ball.
4. Neither the catcher, nor any other defensive player may fake a catch to force a runner to stop or slide.

In an attempt to overcome increased slowness to the game that a catcher may potentially add, up to 3 game balls may be used.

* For example, if a catcher is struggling to catch and / or return throw the ball back to the coach pitcher; she may simply roll or flip a pitched ball to a defensive coach (or designee) located either behind her or to the side of her at the backstop. The defensive coach or designee may return the balls back to the coach pitcher when appropriate. Obviously, only one ball will be officially in play at a time.

## Defensive Stoppage of Play:

1. Stoppage of play occurs when a player requests time and the request is AWARDED by the umpire. In order for the request for time to be awarded, the following must occur.
	* Play is stopped on a batted ball once any player has control of the ball inside the circle and holds the ball up and is ***awarded*** time by the umpire. The base runner gets the next base if they are in the act of advancing (no hash marks). If a runner stops or delays advancing and is less than half way to the next base, in the umpire’s judgment, she must return to the previous base. There is no push rule, which means a runner cannot be advanced to the next base just because the runner behind her has advanced.
	* Play can also be stopped if the ball is in front of the lead runner. However, base runners behind the lead runner can continue to advance, at risk, to any open bases before time is awarded by the umpire. If the base runners are not attempting to advance to an open base, time will be awarded by the umpire.
	* Play will continue if time is requested and the requesting player then makes a play on a baserunner. If time has been awarded by the umpire, play will not continue, even if a play on a baserunner is made.

Example: Pitcher has the ball and calls time while in the circle; the runner has rounded 3rd before time was called. The pitcher then makes a softball play on the runner, this action overrides the called time and the other runners can advance at their own risk if not subject to the overthrow rule.

## Offensive Rules:

All players will be in the batting order. A player arriving late is inserted in the lineup in the last position and bats when this position comes up next.

10 batter maximum rule of offense. If a team is playing the game with less than 10 players, the maximum number of batters per inning is equal to the number of players in the lineup on the team with the most

players.

### Coach Pitch:

No bunting, no walks, hit batters are not allowed to advance to first base during coach pitch.

### Player Pitch:

Walks and hit batters are awarded first base.

No infield fly rule.

Double and Triple plays are possible on caught fly balls and as otherwise. Runners may advance after tag up.

No stealing.

Appropriate feet first sliding is allowed. Head first sliding is NOT allowed and will be called an out.

Base runners must be in contact with the base until a legally pitched ball reaches home plate.

Emphasis is on teaching the girls proper softball base running skills, and NOT to overly penalize. However, if a coach / team are abusing this rule to their team’s advantage players will be called out at the Umpire’s discretion. If a runner leaves the base too early on a batted ball the play is dead and the runner returns to the base and issued a warning. Batter assumes previous count.

For Example, if a team has been warned not to leave the base too early, then a player on first leaves before the ball reaches the plate on a batted ball and the batter safely makes it to first base, the runner going to second, if determined by the umpire to have left too early, can be called out because it is not possible for her to return to first base.

Coaches are responsible for making sure runners have returned to their respective base prior to the next pitch.

For example, a base runner may come off the base once a legally pitched ball reaches home plate. If the batter does not put the ball into fair play, the base runner must return to her original base before the next pitch is thrown.

## Last Batter:

The offensive coach should notify the umpire and defensive coach that the last batter is coming to bat.

There are NO automatic two outs with the last batter. There must be an out on the lead runner. Touching home plate constitutes getting the lead runner out.

## Overthrow Rule:

Overthrows include past balls, wild throws, and missed catches, regardless of whether the ball winds up in fair or foul territory. Throws attempted for a forcible out after the runner has clearly reached the base

do not qualify as overthrows. The ball should be released by the fielder before the runner reaches the base for the overthrow rule to apply.

Overthrows by an **infielder** on attempted forced outs at all bases will result in:

1. The runner attempting to be forced out may not advance nor may runners behind that runner. This also includes force attempts made to a player covering home plate.
	* Example: The 3rd baseman fields a ground ball and desires to force out a girl running from 1st to 2nd. The runner has clearly reached 2nd base before the fielder has attempted a throw. Any throw attempted by the fielder to 2nd base at this point does not qualify as an overthrow because there is no longer a play at 2nd base. The appropriate play is for the fielder to call time in the baseline between 2nd and 3rd or, establish time by control of the ball within the circle.
2. Runners ahead of the runner attempting to be forced out may advance one additional base at risk.
	* Example: There is a runner on 1st base. A ball is batted back to the circle player. The circle player fields the ball and attempts to throw the batter out at 1st base but the ball is overthrown. The batter-runner may not advance past 1st base. The lead runner going to 2nd base may advance to 3rd base at risk but may not advance any further due to the overthrow made at 1st base by the circle player. Note: the lead runner is not “awarded” 3rd base due to the overthrow and she advances in this situation at risk of being put out.

## General Rules:

Time limit for a game is 75 minutes, which means no new inning can start after the 75 minutes has expired. The next inning is considered to have started as soon as the last out is made in an inning. In an effort to keep the games progressing on time both coaches need to be ready to start their game within 10 minutes of the previous games finish. If both coaches are not ready at the time to play, the clock will start thus reduce the amount of actual game time.

A maximum of five innings per game unless tied before the end of regulation play. Extra innings, in case of a tie, can be played as long as the regulation time has not expired. A game ending in a tie after time has expired will be considered to have ended in a tie. Games that ended in a tie will not be played off at a later time.

A team must have 8 players to start a game. See “Pick-Up Players” below for clarification on the number of players.

Home team is to keep the official score book.

Home team will be located in the 1st base dugout and visiting team will be located in the 3rd base dugout.

Three defensive coaches may be on the field (in foul territory): one in the outfield grass on the first base side, one in the outfield grass on the third base side, and one near the on-deck circle closest to their dugout. All other defensive coaches must remain in the dugout during play.

A complete game, because of rain or other circumstances, is three innings.

Game time is to begin at the umpire’s designation.

Sporting chatter is allowed and positive cheering is encouraged. Any taunting of or verbal abuse on a player on the opposing team will not be tolerated. Chants/Chatter with the intent to distract the batter when they are about to swing or a pitcher is about to release a pitch is not allowed. Example, changing the tone, beat, rhythm of the chant/chatter when the batter is about to swing. This will be called a dead ball and the batter will not have that swing count against her.

If there is a play at the plate the ball must be thrown home unless it is a natural softball play.  The catcher is the only player allowed to cover the plate on plays at home unless it is a natural play.  If a team violates this rule and an out is made at home it will be declared obstruction and the player will be ruled safe at home.  Examples:  The first baseman, circle player or any other player cannot cover the plate or run the ball home unless it is a natural play.  The catcher should not just be used to back up the throw.  Some examples of a natural play would be a ball fielded right in front of home plate and the pitcher picks the ball up and tags the runner or steps on the plate in the case of a force out.  Another example would be a ball is thrown home with the catcher covering the plate and the ball is overthrown, if the catcher goes and gets the overthrown ball then another player (pitcher typically) may cover the plate..  A natural play will be determined by the umpire.  This rule is to force coaches to use the catcher as intended and to not have other players covering the plate.

## Missing Batters:

If a player misses her turn at bat (due to bathroom visit, visible injury, etc.), the umpire, the opposing coach, and scorer should be alerted. It will not be deemed an out and the game will proceed with the next hitter in the lineup. Whenever the player returns from the bathroom or recovers from an injury before the half inning ends, she should be placed in the next spot in the lineup at the time of her return (not last in the order). However, if the injured or missing player does not return to the lineup, the team will only bat 9 batters maximum during that team’s at bat or, the maximum number of batters per inning established at the beginning of the game minus 1 batter. Thus, another team member may not be designated to bat twice for the injured or missing player in any inning. The opposing team may bat their maximum number of batters during their turn at bat.

## Batting out of turn:

If it is realized by your team or your opponent that a player has batted out of turn, she is to be inserted directly into the next batting slot. She should be placed on-deck if a player is currently in the batter's box with a pitch count.

## Pick-Up/ Pull-Over Players:

A “Pull-Up” is a player from the 6U league. A “Pull-Over” is a player from within the 8U league.

“Pull-Up” and “Pull-Over” are allowed and encouraged to make 9 players. For teams playing with 8 players, outs are not taken for the 10th position, but will be taken for the 9th batter position in each inning’s batting order.

The following rules apply to Pull-Over players (i.e., picking up players from within our own 8U league):

1. “Pull-Over” players will bat last in the lineup and play either Left or Right field only. They CANNOT play center field, short fielder, or infield.
2. Recruiting 1st or 2nd round draft picks as “Pull-Overs” is strongly discouraged – sometimes this may be necessary to make 8 players in order to play the game – to do so remains within the spirit of the rules because the kids will get to play their scheduled game. At other times, keep in mind that in order to improve, advanced players need to be playing up in the 10U league when a 10U team is short. The following rules apply to “Pull-Up” players (i.e., picking up players from the 6U league):
3. Utilizing “Pull-Up” or “Pull-Over” players does not result in an automatic loss.
4. “Pull-Up” will bat last and may play any outfield position; however, the Pull-Up player must rotate around the outfield and should not play in the same outfield position every inning.
5. The Pull-Up player may be allowed to play 1 inning of infield if the following criteria are met:
	* Both head coaches agree and
	* Only if every regular team member present has played at least 1 inning of infield during that game.
6. League commissioner will have a list of “Pull-Up” players from the 6U league and the eligible players for “Pull-Over” from the 8U league, if needed.

## Players that show up late:

If a player shows up late, and if included, would make the 9th player, that player will replace the pull up/over unless both coaches agree to leave that replacement player in. If 2 players show up late, and if included, would make a team of 10 players, then any pull ups or overs must be removed from the game.

## Infield Playing Time:

There will be a 2 consecutive game, 3 inning minimum for each girl to play in the infield (i.e., there will be no girl in the 8U league that plays less than 3 innings in the infield for 2 consecutive games).

# A player may not be capable of playing first base or circle. No player should be put in a potentially harmful position because of this rule.

* For example, for safety reasons, a player may be capable of playing second base but not circle or first base.
* The catcher position is an infield position.
* If a player or a player’s parent does not want a girl to play an infield position, this should be discussed with the commissioner of the league

The Hoover Softball Association (HSA) will not tolerate umpires that only seem interested in getting the game over with, so they can leave or get paid. Any negative reports related to this type of action by an umpire to the commissioner of softball will result in the umpire not being allowed to umpire any more this year at H S A.

***League Policy: Games balls provide by the league are not to be given out as “GAME BALLS” unless the coach has purchased a similar quality replacement ball for the league. If game balls are to be given out, these balls should be purchased in advance by the coach.***

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Any revision, modification or addition to these rules communicated to the league by the League Commissioner, Softball Commissioner or League President will serve as an amendment to this set of rules.