



## 6U, 7U, & 8U Softball Playing Rules

### **Preface:**

The Board of Directors of the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association hereby empowers the Board of Girls Softball Commissioners to administer all phases of this program (that are not specifically reserved for the Board of Directors action) as outlined in these rules, or that are not in direct violation of said Association's by-laws. Within these limits the decisions of the majority of the Board of Girls Softball Commissioners will be official with 50% of the voting members of the Board present, one of which must be either the Director of Softball, or Assistant Director of Softball. An absent Board member's vote is counted as a yes unless the absent Board member specifically designates their vote as abstention.

Any rules not specifically noted will default to USA Softball Rules.

### **I. General Rules.**

1. League divisions shall be comprised of areas designated by the Board of Softball Commissioners. Any rules not covered are governed by the current USA Softball Rule Book.

### **A. Teams.**

1. If there are insufficient numbers to create separate 7u and 8u divisions, those divisions will be combined and the 8u rules will apply
2. One or more teams will be formed from players residing in each elementary school area, at the discretion of the age level Commissioner(s) with the approval of the Softball Board. Two or more schools may be combined at the discretion of the age level Commissioner.

3. Roster limits for teams for the current season shall be not fewer than eleven (11) or more than thirteen (13) players, unless otherwise approved by the age level Commissioner(s) with Softball Board approval.
4. All girls who were on a team roster of a certain school the preceding year may return to a team from that school provided that they are still within the age limit.
5. Special Education, private school and out-of-district students may play at the school attended or at the nearest elementary school.

**B. Player Eligibility.**

1. **6U Players.** Players shall be eligible for 6U softball if they are 5 or 6 years old on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year, and have turned in completed registration, parent consent, medical release forms, proof of age, and have paid the required player fee or been granted a waiver of fee.
2. **7U Players.** Players shall be eligible for the 7U softball if they are 7 years old on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year, and have turned in completed registration/parent consent/medical release forms, proof of age, and have paid the required player fee or been granted a waiver of fee.
3. **8U Players.** Players shall be eligible for the 8U softball if they are 8 years old on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year, and have turned in completed registration/parent consent/medical release forms, proof of age, and have paid the required player fee or been granted a waiver of fee.

If a team uses an ineligible player, it should be reported to the age level commissioner or the Director of Softball. A committee of three (3) commissioners shall be appointed by SBMSA to investigate, hold a hearing at which all concerned parties are afforded the opportunity to be present, and to render a binding decision. If the committee determines that an ineligible player was used, it may then declare a forfeit of any game(s) played using said player, suspend the manager, or take any other appropriate action.

**C. Additional Guidelines Regarding Team Formation.**

1. All players should be divided and assigned to teams by ages as equally as possible. Any “Play Up” request is at the discretion of the softball board and not automatically granted.

2. After the assignment of players to teams, all new prospective players expressing a desire to play shall be placed on a waiting list, and shall be added to teams by the Age Level Commissioner(s) on a space available basis.

#### **D. Registration and Fee Information.**

1. Fees are set by the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association Board of Directors annually.
2. No girl shall be deprived of participation solely due to finances. If the age level Commissioner is satisfied that a hardship exists, the girl will be allowed to play at no cost provided all necessary forms are completed and approved by the Softball Program Director.
3. Registration is on-line or in-person during designated times. Any player desiring to play after registration deadline must submit the fee, proof of age, and registration form to the SBMSA where they will be placed on a waiting list for team assignment if and when a position becomes available.
4. Any girl whose registration and fee or birth certificate are not in the Commissioner's possession by the date set by the Softball Board will not be allowed to participate in practice sessions, be issued a uniform nor allowed to play in any game until these requirements are met.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the Commissioner to work with his or her manager(s) to assist in meeting these requirements.

#### **E. Schedules and Scores.**

1. Game schedules. Schedules will be prepared by the scheduling Commissioner for distribution to all teams.
2. Game Scores. The home team is responsible for the official score keeping of the game. The score may be kept manually (not electronically) in a proper scorebook or using the GameChanger app. Although not the official score book, it is strongly recommended that the visiting team keep a score as well. It shall be the duty of **the manager of the winning team** to inform his/her Age Level Commissioner of the final score within twenty-four (24) hours of the completion of the game.

#### **G. Postponed Games.**

1. If, in the opinion of the duty commissioner & umpire, a game cannot be played because of weather, wet field, etc., the game will be postponed.
2. If a game is postponed, the League shall notify the managers in time to notify the team members before game time. If this decision to postpone can be made in time, the game(s) postponement will be noted on the rain out system posted on the website or register through the SBMSA Softball website to receive field condition “Text” messages.

#### **F. Practice Games.**

1. Managers may schedule practice games with other teams if so desired. If the other team is not in our program, the Manager must obtain prior approval of the Softball Program Director.

#### **G. Equipment.**

1. Uniforms shall include a shirt to be supplied by SBMSA. At least a four-inch number is required on the back center in a visible position on the shirt. Shorts or full-length pants, and tennis or rubber cleated shoes, and high top socks are the responsibility of the player and having them match is optional.
2. Names may be added to the back of the team shirts per the discretion of the team manager. Additional “advertising” is strictly prohibited unless prior approval is obtained by the Director of Softball prior to such advertisement being displayed on any uniforms. Last names are preferred for safety reasons.
3. USA Softball rules on bats will be enforced (**Tee-Ball bats are prohibited**). Protective headgear must be worn while batting and running. Batting helmets must have chin straps and full face-guard as required by USA Softball.
4. At the end of the season, it is the responsibility of each Team Manager to return all provided equipment. The cost of any equipment (which was signed for when received) not turned in at the end of the season may be charged to the team manager.

## **II. Official Playing Rules.**

All 6U, 7U & 8U League games shall be played in accordance with rules outlined in official USA Softball rule book with the exceptions or explanations noted in the following paragraphs.

## **A. Playing Field Exceptions.**

The playing field shall be laid out according to the following instructions, supplemented by the diagrams at the end of these rules. (*Exceptions apply to both 6U, 7U & 8U unless otherwise specified*).

1. 6U, 7U & 8U League infields shall be a sixty (60) foot square. The outfield shall be the area between the two foul lines formed by extending two sides of the square as shown in the diagram.
2. The Infield and outfield, including the boundary lines, are fair territory, and all other area is foul territory.
3. The distance between bases shall be sixty (60) feet for 6U, 7U & 8U.
4. The batters' boxes, the coaches' boxes and the three foot first base lines shall be laid out per USA Softball.
5. The catcher's box shall be the area behind home plate extending to the backstop. The batter's box shall be rectangular, 6 feet by 3 feet. The inside line shall be parallel to and 4 inches from each side of home plate. The inside line shall be parallel to and 4 inches from each side of home plate. It shall extend forward from the center of home plate 3 feet and to the rear 3 feet.
6. The distance between the point of home plate and the front edge of the pitcher's rubber shall be thirty-five (35) feet for 6U, 7U, and 8U.
7. It is the responsibility of both managers to verify the proper marking of the distance between bases, and pitching rubber and home plate at least 10 minutes prior to game time. If a game field is improperly marked, and is discovered while the game is in progress, the game shall be halted, the field properly marked, and the game continued from that point without loss of playing time.

## **B. Rule Modifications for Coach-Pitch Softball.**

1. Each coach will pitch to his/her own players.
2. The defensive player, playing the position of pitcher, shall remain with at least one foot inside the pitcher's circle until the pitched ball has been delivered to the batter. *The pitcher player shall position themselves behind the pitchers' rubber until the batter has made contact with the ball.*

3. The coach-pitcher shall not make any attempt to or interfere with the ball or any defensive player. The penalty for intentional interference: ball is dead; batter is out; no runners advance. If the umpire determines the interference was unavoidable, ball is dead; forced runners advance; batter is awarded first base.
4. After a batted ball, the coach-pitcher must remove himself/herself to outside the foul lines until the ball is dead.
5. Only the coach-pitcher may instruct the batter and only from within the pitcher's circle until the batter becomes a base runner at which time base coaches may instruct the batter-base runner as well as the coach-pitcher as long as the coach pitcher is performing such instruction from outside the foul lines (not on the field of play). ***Coach-pitchers returning onto the field of play prior to the ball being declared dead will result in the ball immediately being called dead and play is stopped.***
6. Pitches:
  - a. **6U** – The Batter will have a **maximum** of five (5) chances to put the ball into play. The Coach Pitcher will pitch under-handed a **maximum** of three (3) pitches. If the Batter fails to put the ball into fair play, then the batter will be allowed two (2) opportunities to hit the ball off the tee. Failure by the Batter to put the ball into fair ball territory with the above listed five (5) opportunities will be declared out.
  - b. **7U** - The Batter will have a **maximum** of five (5) chances to put the ball into play. The Coach Pitcher will pitch under-handed a **maximum** of five (5) pitches. If the Batter fails to put the ball into fair play, with the above listed five (5) opportunities will be declared out. A foul ball on the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch will be declared an out. If the batter swings and misses at 3 pitches, the batter will still be awarded the chance to swing at a maximum of 5 total pitches.
  - c. **8U** - A **maximum** of six (6) pitches shall be delivered to any one batter. If, at the end of six pitches the batter has not put the ball in play or struck out swinging, the batter is out. A batter shall not become a base runner unless she puts the ball in play. *Foul balls that occur on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch still result in the batter being declared out.*
7. The coach-pitcher may pitch from the rubber, or in front of the rubber, as long as one foot remains in the circle upon release of the ball. A coach pitcher may not warm up at any time on the playing field.

### C. Failure to Appear.

Game will be forfeited if a team fails to appear at the field within fifteen minutes of scheduled game time. For a team to be declared a forfeit winner, it must have the required team numbers for a regulation game present at the field. If neither team appears, a double forfeit shall be declared. All games will count at the end of the regular season in determining division winners.

### D. Players and Substitutes.

1. A team shall consist of ten (10) players. The tenth player may be used as a short fielder or fifth infielder. For 6U and 7U, the player can be used as a short fielder but must keep both feet outside the pitching circle and start behind the pitching rubber. For 8U, the 10<sup>th</sup> fielder must start in an Outfield position and is then allowed to enter the infield upon the batter contacting the ball.
2. The catcher shall play in the regular catcher's position, just behind the home plate.
3. Unlimited substitution in the field is allowed except as limited by other rules.
4. In 6U & 7U, there may be no more than seven (7) infielders including the pitcher and catcher; **the three outfielders must begin play with both feet in the grass behind the baselines.** In 8U, There may be no more than six (6) infielders including the pitcher and catcher; **the four outfielders must begin play with both feet in the grass behind the baselines.**

### E. Length of Game.

1. Regulation game shall be six (6) innings in 6U, 7U & 8U, or when:
  - a. The home team leads by more than five (5) runs at the end of five and one half (5-1/2) innings (except that there will be no mercy rule for 6U but the game will be stopped at the last batter per time requirement in the event the score to win is unreachable); or
  - b. The home team scores the winning run in the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) inning before the inning is complete; or

- c. The score is tied at the end of six (6) innings, and then the game is terminated. No extra innings are played, except in the playoffs.
  - d. Terminated by umpire on account of weather, darkness, or other causes which make further play impossible provided three or more innings have been played, or the home team has scored more runs before the completion of the third inning than the visiting team has scored in three (3) innings. If terminated before a minimum of two and a half (2½) innings, game shall be rescheduled; if terminated beyond a minimum point, the score as it stands at the point of termination shall be final.
  - e. If game is terminated by umpire after four (4) completed innings the score of the game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning. If, however, the home team shall have scored as many or more runs as the visiting team when the game is terminated while the home team is at bat, the score of such game shall be the total number of runs scored by each team.
2. **Maximum Runs Per Inning.** In addition to any other rules affecting the game, a team's turn at bat, in any inning, shall terminate when such team scores a total of five (5) runs during the inning.
  3. **Run Rule.** The fifth and final inning of any game shall not be started when one team is more than five (5) runs ahead. Any game in which this rule is involved shall be declared an official game.
  4. **Regulation Time Limit.** No inning shall start after one hour and ten minutes (70 minutes) of playing time has elapsed from the start of the game. Loss of playing time due to injury, delay on account of rain, etc., shall not count in this noted time limit. Injury timeouts will be called by umpire. Managers must notify umpire of any injury at which time the umpire will call time out per their discretion.

**F. Mandatory Playing.**

It is the aim of the Association for each girl to participate in each game. An exception may be made in case that a girl is ill or injured and unable to play, or being disciplined by her manager. In such case the opposing manager and official scorekeeper shall be notified prior to the start of the game, and the reason for the discipline stated in writing on the lineup sheet.

1. **Batting.** A team must bat its entire roster of all girls present consecutively in the order appearing in lineup sheet submitted at the start of the game. Players arriving late must be added at the end of the roster. If a player is unable to finish the game, her position in the batting order is passed over, with the opposing manager and official scorekeeper being notified.
2. **Playing in the Field.** Every player must play defensively a minimum of every other inning.
3. **Penalty for Violation.** It shall be the duty of the Age Level Commissioner to see that the Mandatory Playing Rule is complied with. Periodic checks should be made to assure that this occurs.

This rule will be enforced by a standing Committee of 3 Commissioners: the League Commissioner, the Assistant Director of Softball (who shall be the Chairman) and one other Commissioner appointed by the Director of Softball (or by the Chairman in his or her absence).

Violation of this rule shall result in the suspension of the manager for one or more games, and may result in a forfeit of the game against the offending team, at the discretion of the Committee. If the Committee determines that a Manager or person in charge willfully violated this Rule, the penalty shall be automatic suspension for the remainder of the season, including playoff and post season games, in addition to other penalties, including forfeiture.

Any violation should be reported to the Division Commissioner or Director of Softball by any interested person aware of such.

#### **G. Required Equipment.**

1. 6U and 7U will use an 11-inch safety ball (A.D. Starr Dixie 11 – Level 5, DX511SO).
2. 8U will use an 11-inch ball. A.D. Starr by (Dixie 11- Level 5, DX511SO) for kid pitch.
3. 8U will use the 11-inch A.D. Starr Spirit Softball, (OUSA1147PL) for all innings where there is no kid pitch.
4. The catcher must wear full catcher's equipment per USA Softball rules.
5. All players playing defense, will be required to wear a USA Softball approved fielder's face mask.

6. While not required, it is strongly encouraged for pitchers to wear a fabric chest protector.

## **H. Player Limit.**

1. To begin a regulation game, a team must field at least nine (9) players, not fewer than eight (8) of whom must be players on the team roster. No more than two (2) players can be borrowed. Borrowed players must play in the outfield and bat last.
2. If a team cannot field at least eight (8) of its own players at the start of a game, a forfeit game shall be declared.
3. If necessary to borrow players, they will be borrowed as follows:
  - a. If some teams need to borrow players, they should be borrowed only from a younger age division (this does not apply to 6U division – they may borrow 6U players from other teams).
  - b. Any borrowed player must meet the participation rule the same as other players on the team. All borrowed players must be from an SBMSA team from one age division lower and approved by the age level commissioner prior to the start of the game.
  - c. The borrowed player and her parents must agree to the conditions under which the player is borrowed.
  - d. If additional team members become available after the game starts, they must be added to the end of the batting order and the borrowed player(s) may continue to the end of the game if they desire.
  - e. Borrowed players must wear their own team's uniform or regular clothing. Borrowed players cannot wear the uniform of the team for whom they are playing.
  - f. Opposing managers must be informed of the borrowed player(s) prior to the start of the game.
4. If any of the above rules concerning borrowed players are not followed, it will result in forfeiture.
5. If a forfeit game is declared because a team cannot field the required number of players at the outset, team members should be divided or borrowed in some manner possible to form two teams and a "fun" game played in lieu of a

regulation game. Because it is not an official game, no umpires will be available. Players must be registered players.

## **I. Batting.**

1. Batter shall be declared out for thrown bat. The ball is dead and all base runners must return to previously occupied bases.
  - a. Whether a bat was thrown or not shall be solely a decision of the umpire, and is not subject to protest. *One warning shall be issued (by the umpire) to both teams upon the first infraction by either team (per game).*
  - b. This rule is inserted to protect the players.
  - c. Player is out whether bat was thrown on purpose or not.
2. Protective headgear must be worn while batting and running. Batting helmets must have chin straps and full face guard as required by USAS Rules
3. The batter shall not hinder the catcher from fielding or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinder the catcher while standing in the batter's box.
4. The infield fly rule will not be enforced in 6u, 7u or 8u.
5. Strikeouts:
  - a. **6U.** The Batter will have five (5) chances to put the ball into play. The Coach Pitcher will pitch under-handed a maximum of three (3) pitches. IF the Batter fails to put the ball into fair play, then the batter will be allowed two (2) opportunities to hit the ball off the tee. Failure by the Batter to put the ball into fair ball territory with the above listed five (5) opportunities will be declared out. No batter or runner shall be awarded more than one base after contacting the ball off of the tee
  - b. **7U.** The Batter will have five (5) chances to put the ball into play. The Coach Pitcher will pitch under-handed a maximum of five (5) pitches. If the Batter fails to put the ball into fair play, then the batter will be declared out. There is no strikeout at 3 pitches, each player will be allowed a maximum of five (5) swings.

c. **8U.** The Batter is out on the third strike (or after six pitches without hitting a fair ball – *includes foul balls on 6<sup>th</sup> pitch*). All fouls are strikes except on third strike.

6. Bunting is not allowed.

7. The coach-pitcher shall not make any attempt to or interfere with the ball or any defensive player. The penalty for intentional interference: ball is dead; batter is out; no runners advance. If the umpire determines the interference was unavoidable, ball is dead; forced runners advance; batter is awarded first base.

## J. Baserunning.

1. **No stealing.** In 6U, runners cannot advance until batter hits ball. In 7U & 8U, the runners can leave the base at release of the pitch (either by the coach or player pitcher). There are no steals and there will be no attempts allowed to throw behind runners.

2. **Overthrows.** In 6U and 7U, no player may advance more than one base on a batted ball that does not travel beyond the baseline, and any play made on a batted ball that does not reach beyond the baseline will allow the defensive player to make an attempt at any base without the base runner advancing to the next base (*i.e.*, if the batted ball does not travel beyond the baseline, there is no extra base on any overthrow). Whether or not the ball travels past the baseline is at the sole discretion of the umpire. Umpire to quickly indicate if ball travels past baseline by waving one hand in air in circular motion to indicate that baserunners may advance more than one base (because the ball was hit past baseline). In 8U, Batter-runner and base runners may advance only one base when any ball is overthrown at any base when a defensive player is attempting to make a play on a base runner or the batter-runner. If a ball is overthrown when returning it to the pitcher in the circle after the overthrow, the ball is considered dead and runners may not advance. Rolling the ball is not allowed. If the ball is rolled and it is deemed by the umpire to be intentional, the batter-runner will be awarded the base.

### 3. Advancing:

a. The ball is declared “**DEAD**” and all play is suspended when:

i. **6U and 7U.** With the exception of 3.a.iii below, the pitcher enters the pitcher’s circle with the ball in her possession –OR– an

OVERTHROW occurs returning the ball to **the pitcher** (who has both feet inside the pitcher's circle) AND the ball crosses the plane.

- ii. **8U.** With the exception of 3.a.iii below, runners may advance until the ball is in the possession of **the pitcher** in the pitching circle.
- iii. **6U/7U/8U.** The pitcher can move into or through the circle when attempting to make a play, and based on the umpires best assessment of player's intent can determine whether the ball should be dead or not.

At this time, the ball shall be declared "dead" in a loud voice by the umpire. A base runner advancing to any unoccupied base shall be held at the base to which she is advancing. Base runners occupying a base shall remain at that base. Coaches are expected to abide by and not take advantage of this rule at any time.

**As an alternative- to Rule 3 (a & b) for 6U/7U:**

In the 6u and 7u divisions, any fielder in possession of the ball may hold a runner at a base by approaching the lead baserunner and forcing the runner to return to the base. This is recognized when a fielder (with the ball in their possession) moves toward the lead baserunner and forces them to retreat back to the last base they came from. At this time, the ball should be declared "dead" by the umpire in a loud voice). This alternative does not apply in 8U.

***If the infielder in possession of the ball chooses to force a runner back to a base that is not a lead baserunner, baserunners ahead of play may continue to advance.***

**K. Instructions for Players.**

1. Base runners are to run across the home plate but not over the catcher.
2. Catchers are not to block the plate.
3. Catcher must wear face mask and body protector at all times while catching.
4. Managers, coaches and others must wear mask while catching or behind the plate.
5. All defensive players must wear masks (6U, 7U, 8U).

**L. Defensive Play.**

1. The pitcher must have one foot inside the circle in the rear one-half of the pitching circle until the ball has been put in play.
2. In 6U and 7U, corner infielders may not be closer than forty-five (45 feet) from the batter until the ball has been batted. Middle infielders must stay two feet in front of or behind the imaginary line between first base and third base until after the ball has been batted.
3. Each player on each team must play at least one defensive inning in the infield (excluding the catcher position) in every game. In the event that a game ends due to the mercy rule before a team is able to complete its defensive rotation, the players that did not play infield must play infield to start that teams following game.

**M. 8U Pitching.**

Beginning in regular season game 6, or earlier as determined by the 8U commissioner, each team will start the game with one inning of kid pitch:

1. The 8U kid pitcher will use the A.D. Starr Dixie 11- Level 5 Safety ball.
2. The pitcher may pitch from the 35' rubber Mound distance. If the kid pitcher chooses, pitcher may pitch anywhere from the rubber to the front of the circle. Pitcher may use the chalk line at the front of the circle as a pitching rubber.
3. The umpire will be in position to call balls and strikes on the batter.
4. In the event the pitcher throws 4 balls, the batter will not be allotted first base. The coach pitcher will enter the playing field and the kid pitcher will take the position of player/pitcher. The coach pitcher will be allowed to throw as many pitches as strikes remaining in the count. For example, if the kid pitcher walks a player on 4 consecutive pitches, the coach pitcher will have 3 pitches to allow the batter to put the ball in play. The batter will be declared out on a foul ball third strike.
5. In the event the batter contacts the ball off the kid pitcher, the ball will be considered live.
6. In the event the batter strikes out against the kid pitcher, the at bat will count and the player will be retired.

7. In the event the batter is hit by a pitch, the pitch will count as a Ball
8. The maximum runs against by the kid pitcher will be 2. Once the second run scores, the half-inning will end.
9. Each team must alternate pitchers every other game during the regular season. During the playoffs, Gold Division (top division) teams will be allowed to utilize one or more pitchers. In all other playoff divisions, teams must alternate a minimum of two pitchers.

#### **N. Coaches.**

The offensive team shall be allowed only four coaches on the field. Two (2) must remain in the coaches' boxes (1B & 3B), one (1) being the coach-pitcher and the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) may be in the dugout to maintain the batting alignment.

1. Coaches must be Managers, Assistant Managers, parents or players.
2. Defensive Manager and Assistant Managers must remain in the dugout.
3. No more than four (4) adults for each team may be within the playing field at any time.
4. (6U ONLY) – If agreed upon by both head coaches prior to beginning of the game, two coaches may be placed in the outfield (located in the outfield grass, behind the outfielders) to instruct players. They may instruct in “voice only”. No attempt to physically position or move players prior to or during play will be allowed.
5. No “back-up” coach/catcher allowed behind home plate.
6. Shoes – closed toed shoes must be worn by anyone entering the field of play (including dugout). Bare feet, sandals, and are flip-flops are prohibited.
7. All adults other than two (2) base coaches and the coach-pitcher must remain in the dugout.

#### **O. Definition of Terms.**

1. **Base Coach.** A team member, manager or assistant manager who is stationed in the coach's box at first or third base to direct the batter and base runners.
2. **Base Runner.** A term that identifies the offensive player who has just finished her time at bat until she is put out or until the play on which she becomes a runner ends.
3. **Batter's Box.** The area within which the batter must stand during the time at bat.
4. **Bunt.** For 6u, 7u or 8u games the umpire shall make the determination as to whether the batter is attempting to bunt.
5. **Catch.** The act of a fielder in getting secure possession in her hand or glove of a ball in flight, and she does not use her cap, body protector, pocket or any other part of her uniform in getting possession.
6. **Catcher's Box.** That area within which the catcher is positioned behind home plate to be able to catch a pitch thrown over the plate. A catcher must position herself in the catcher's box.
7. **Foul ball.** A batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
8. **Defensive Pitcher.** The fielder designated to occupy the pitcher's position at the edge of the 6-foot radius (12-foot diameter) circle drawn around the pitching rubber.
9. **Strike.** Is called on the batter when the ball:
  - a. Is struck by the batter and missed, or
  - b. Is fouled by the batter, or
  - c. Becomes a foul tip.

**P. Field Decorum.**

1. The designated Head Coach will be solely responsible for the conduct of his or her team and its followers. In his or her absence the first Assistant Coach

shall assume that responsibility. *ONLY THE HEAD COACH, OR ASSISTANT IN THEIR ABSENCE, SHALL QUESTION OR PROTEST ANY RULING BY THE UMPIRE.* Any appeal is waived if not raised first by the Head Coach, or assistant in their absence, by calling time and approaching the umpire making the call.

2. At no time shall any team manager, coach, parent or player harass or make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about any players, officials, spectators or umpires.
3. Smoking or the use of other tobacco products is not allowed in the dugout or on the playing field.
4. Steel cleats are prohibited.
5. Positive team cheering will be allowed. Saying "Swing, batter" or calling the batter's name or number in an attempt to distract the batter will not be allowed. In short, cheer for your team, not against the other team.
6. **Penalty for violation of Rule 2 above.** Prompt removal of the offender from the game and grounds. For the first offense manager or coaches may be warned, but for a second offense, they are removed from the game, and shall leave the grounds. Failure to do so will warrant forfeiture of the game.

### III. Code of Ethics.

#### 1. **Sportsmanship.**

It shall be considered improper and inconsistent with honorable and dignified bearing for any commissioner, manager, coach, umpire, parent or player:

- A. To conduct himself or herself in any un-sportsman-like manner on or near any practice or playing field, or
- B. To enter a practice or playing field while intoxicated, or to indulge in the use of intoxicating beverages or controlled substances, or to be under the influence of intoxicating beverages or controlled substances while on or near the practice or playing fields, or
- C. To use obscene or abusive language at practice or during games, or to conduct himself or herself in any other manner that could be considered detrimental to the Softball Program and not in the best interests of the Sports Association. Anyone violating any of the above Code of Ethics

shall be subject to expulsion and removal from the practice or playing field and/or from his or her position in the program.

- D.** Sportsmanship is mandatory at all times.

## **2. Rules of Conduct.**

The policy of the SBMSA Board is that the Girls Softball Program be conducted and carried out by all participants in a competitive but sporting manner. It is expected that all involved will treat each other with courtesy and respect, and that players, coaches, parents, and spectators should always control their emotions. This requires all adults involved to set a good example so that the players may learn to accept both victory and defeat in a fair and responsible way.

One of the primary goals of the SBMSA is to teach Good Sportsmanship to our area youth. Displays of poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, parents, and / or spectators will not be tolerated. As a discouragement of such displays, the SBMSA Executive Board mandates a one game suspension for any player or coach ejected from a game by a game official based on poor sportsmanship or any parent or spectator removed from a game by a game official based on poor sportsmanship. This suspension shall be administered by the Softball Director and the Softball Board. While the one game suspension is mandated, the Softball Director and the Softball Board may for particularly outrageous behavior or recurring incidents, levy suspensions of additional games up to and including the remainder of a season or future seasons. The decision of the Softball Director and the Softball Board shall be final and not subject to an appeal.

## **3. Sportsmanship Committee.**

SBMSA Board of Directors has created a formal Sportsmanship Committee to assist each sport Program Director/Board on serious or recurrent sportsmanship violations by any coach, parent, player or fan. The Sportsmanship committee is charged to formalize and mandate, through consistent and reportable actions, that Sportsmanship is a core value of SBMSA. That includes better tracking of individuals who display repeated lapses of good sportsmanship and/or conduct across multiple SBMSA program venues. This committee will be led by the Sportsmanship Director and each sport will appoint a representative to serve on this committee. At his/her sole discretion, the Sportsmanship Director may appoint additional individuals to serve of this committee.

This committee brings consistency and accountability to the coach selection process between the sport programs and provides a mechanism to permanently remove coaches for repeat lapses in sportsmanship and/or indifference in providing positive coaching and mentoring leadership to our youth athletes. This committee can also be engaged to address issues outside of actions by game officials where a coach/parent/athlete/fan merits disciplinary discussion for repetitive or very serious sportsmanship violations and/or has been previously suspended for conduct detrimental to league core values. Program Directors can request any serious sportsmanship violation by a coach, player, parent or fan etc. be referred to the Sportsmanship Committee. Any recommendations by the Sportsmanship Committee will be handed to the sports Program Director/Board for final action and are not subject to an appeal. Unless otherwise communicated by Program Director, any matter forwarded to the Sportsmanship Committee will be considered an immediate and indefinite suspension until Sportsmanship Committee hands final recommendation to sports Program Director/Board for final action.

#### **IV. Field Housekeeping.**

**Coaches (for each team) are responsible in making sure dugouts and the fields are clear of trash/litter after each game. Make sure your players and fans clean up after themselves.**

Home teams for the first games played on each field are responsible for putting out the bases and the visitors put away bases after the last game. Make sure equipment room is locked at all times.

**Home team turns on lights first game (when necessary) and visiting team turns off lights after the last game and closes & locks up bathrooms (Guthrie).**

Visiting team coaches are responsible for making sure that playing field is properly marked (chalked) **at least (15 minutes)** prior to game time.

**REMEMBER!**

**PLAY HARD BUT PLAY FAIR.**

**REMEMBER IT IS A FUN PROGRAM.**

**IF YOU TAKE THE FUN OUT OF PLAYING, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT.**

**Sportsmanship is always mandatory.**

## **VI. Miscellaneous.**

The rainout number for SBMSA is 281-583-3600.

Coaches must make sure dug outs are clear of trash and litter after each game. Make sure your team and fans know they should clean up after themselves. Home teams put out bases first game and put away bases last game. Make sure equipment room is locked at all times. Visiting teams turn on lights first game and turn off lights last game. Lock up gate to light switch cage. Coaches rake fields before/after games as needed.

Home teams report scores to age division commissioners.