

D.O.L.L.S.

First and Second Grade Level Rules for Fall 2021

Revised August 2021

Emphasis of this league is on developing basic softball skills - batting, fielding ground balls and fly balls, throwing, defensive positions, base running and making force-outs.

6 v 6 Format for First and Second Grade Levels

The 6 v 6 format increases playing time and batting and development opportunities – and the fun! – for everyone.

Here's how the 6 v 6 format works:

- Coaches will split their rosters into two separate squads. For example, a 14 player team will be split into two 7 player squads.
- “Game” time slots will be two hours. Squad 1 from each team will play a 55 minute game during the first half of the assigned time slot. Squad 2 from each team will play a 55 minute game during the second half of the assigned time slot. The 55 minute mark is a “drop dead” time, meaning the game will end at the 55 minute mark no matter the game situation.
- The “6” in 6 v 6 refers to the number of fielders: the defense is limited to the catcher, pitcher, and infield positions.
 - Players must rotate among the fielding positions. Every player must play a fielding position (e.g., shortstop) once before any player plays that position a second time.
 - If a squad has more than six players, all players must rotate sitting out. No player may sit out 2 innings in a row. Every player must sit out once before any player sits out twice. Equal playing time is required for all participants.
 - A squad of 5 players shall play without a catcher. A squad of four players shall borrow a fielder from the other team.
- Batters who hit the ball to the outfield grass may attempt to advance to second base for a double (and no farther).
- Inning length: a squad bats until either (a) the squad scores 4 runs or (b) the defense records 3 outs.
- If a team has less than 12 players for a game, then some players get to channel their inner Ernie Banks and play 2!
- Coaches shall rotate players between the two game squads as much as possible:
 - The goal is not to form 2 mini-teams for the duration of the season who always play together, or to allow BFFs to always play together. The goal is to provide more playing time for everyone, and for the girls to play and interact with everyone on the

team.

- We understand that player absences will make it impracticable to fully rotate girls between squads throughout the season. However, we ask that coaches pay attention to the squad rotations and mix the squads up as much and as often as they can.
- Similarly, defensive position rotations should be followed throughout the season (e.g., a girl should not play first base, pitcher, and shortstop every game, but should rotate through all six positions as equally as practicable throughout the season).
- Squad 2 players should arrive at least 20 minutes before their game begins so they can warm up and be prepared to begin their game promptly. Assistant coaches and parent volunteers will need to help prepare Squad 2 players for their game.

The 6 v 6 format will require a little more organizational work by coaches, assistant coaches, and parent volunteers. However, we're excited about the increased playing, batting and development opportunities the 6 v 6 format will bring to our younger levels. A few additional rules:

1. A continuous batting order is mandatory. "Continuous" batting order means that all players present are placed in the batting order, regardless of which players are playing in the field any given inning.
2. A team's turn at bat concludes when either (a) the batting team scores four runs, or (b) the defensive team records three outs, whichever occurs first.
3. There will be a two-minute time limit between half innings to keep the games moving. Please strictly adhere to this time limit to keep the games moving. Whenever possible please help the catcher put the gear on before the team's at-bat ends.
4. **Batting: Machine Pitch and Batting Tee**
 - The Louisville Slugger Blue Flame UPM 45 pitching machine will be operated by the batting team's coaches. Pitching machine settings will be determined and communicated separately.
 - The batter shall receive up to four (4) pitches from the machine. There are no walks or strikeouts at the First Grade level. If she has not put the ball in play after four (4) pitches, a batting tee shall be used. **This rule shall be strictly enforced.**
 - Games are not hitting practice. Games are the opportunity for girls to perform in areas that they have developed through practice. When coaches treat games like hitting practice (e.g., trying to provide girls more than four pitches in the hope she will finally hit one) it slows the game and is counterproductive to development for everyone, particularly the fielders
5. Coaches/Parent Helpers:
 - a. When batting - 1 coach behind the plate (may assist batters), 1 coach pitching, 1 coach at 1st base, 1 coach at 3rd base.
 - b. When fielding - 2 coaches allowed in the field to assist with positioning and position play.

6. Base Running
 - a. The runner is allowed to take a lead-off after the pitch has crossed the plate.
 - b. Batters may advance beyond first base only on a ball that travels into the outfield. A batter may continue advancing around the bases on a ball hit into the outfield until the ball is fielded and thrown so it crosses into the infield. If a runner is halfway to the next base they may continue at their risk and cannot advance to the next base. If a runner is less than halfway she must return to the base they came from at no risk of an out.
Batters/runners may not advance on an overthrow at any base.
 - c. The First/Second Grade level base peg length is generally 50 feet, although teams will also play on fields with 60 foot base peg lengths. The Fairmount, O'Neill, and Belle Aire fields have have 55 foot base pegs (the Fairmount and O'Neill fields also have 60 foot base pegs, so take care in setting up the field).
7. Stealing bases is not permitted. Runners may not advance on a passed ball.
8. No score is kept. Each team is responsible for tracking their own runs and batting order.
9. A 10" softy ball shall be used.
10. The home team is responsible for setting up the field approximately 30 minutes before game time.
11. The infield fly rule **does not** apply at this level.