

D.O.L.L.S. League Rules

Juniors – 5th & 6th Grade

Revised September 2023

Emphasis of this league is on improving basic softball skills and developing advanced softball skills such as proper mechanics, bunting, bunt coverage, proper base coverage and sliding. **D.O.L.L.S. prioritize Development over Winning and seek to staff the teams with coaches who embrace this set of priorities as well.** USA Softball rules apply for this age group for all aspects of the game not addressed by the below rules.

1. Player Rotation Rule

- a. At every game, all girls are required to play 1 complete inning in the infield and 1 complete inning in the outfield. No player may play the outfield a 2nd inning until all players on the roster have played outfield for 1 inning. 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.
- b. Rotation Rule Violations
 - i. It is the responsibility of each team to monitor that the opposing team is following the rotation rules. A violation of these rules should be brought to the umpire and violating team's attention immediately so that it can be corrected. If a team has violated the rotation rule, the situation will be immediately corrected and that team will forfeit 2 runs (regardless of how many girls are out of rotation). If the team has no runs then it will incur a score of -2. If the rotation violation is not discovered until after that half inning is over, there will be no penalty or repercussions.
 - ii. A team will forfeit the game on its third violation of the rotation/pitching rules.
- c. The rotation pitching rule (section 8) begin anew starting in the 8th inning of an extra inning game.

2. 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. If a batter or runner is injured, the player that recorded the last out will replace the injured player. If the injured player is at bat, the replacement player will assume the ball/strike count. If the injured player cannot continue in the game, no out will be recorded when their turn at bat comes around again.

3. Maximum of 9 defensive players per inning will be allowed. The infield will play the regular 6, and the outfield may play 3 defensive players. A team must field at least 8 players to avoid forfeit. A fifteen (15) minute grace period will be in effect for each team to field the required number of players before a forfeit is declared. In the event of a forfeited game for lack of the requisite number of players, the game shall proceed if at all possible as an "exhibition" game. In an "exhibition" game situation the opposing team shall provide player(s) to play as many outfield positions as necessary so the forfeiting team has 9 players playing in the field. The opposing team players shall not bat for the forfeiting team. The opposing team players playing in the field shall not miss their turn at bat, so the opposing team may be required to shuttle players in and out of the outfield when they are at bat. The point here is that this is an instruction league, and that games should be played and fun should be had at every opportunity.

4. If necessary, a player may be called up from the level directly below (Fourth Grade). Each coach is responsible for obtaining a substitute player.
 - a. A substitute player shall not be called upon if her attendance would knowingly create a roster of 10 or more players
 - b. A substitute player may not pitch or catch
 - c. A substitute player shall bat last in the line-up
 - d. At no time shall a girl who is not a registered member of the D.O.L.L.S. organization be allowed to participate as a player
 - e. A player cannot be called up if she is on the roster for a Rebels team or another travel team.
 - f. If a team puts someone in its lineup that is contrary to these guidelines they will forfeit the game regardless if the infraction is discovered during or after the game.
5. A team's turn at bat concludes if:
 - a. Defensive team records 3 outs, or
 - b. Teams will be limited to 5 runs per inning, with the exception of the final declared inning agreed by both coaches, teams may score up to 10 runs. If a team scores more than 5 runs on a play in any given inning before the final declared inning, for example a team has scored 4 runs in an inning and with the bases loaded the batter hits a grand slam, the team would only score 5 runs, not 8. This also applies in the final inning where a team cannot score more than 10 runs in the inning.
6. Play of game
 - a. A complete game shall consist of 7 complete innings.
 - b. No new inning can begin after 1 hour 45 minutes of play.
 - c. Drop dead rule for regular season games:
 - i. The game will end after 2 hours of play. If the current inning is not completed, the official score will revert back to the last completed inning unless the home team has tied the game or has gone ahead during the current inning at the drop dead time.

Scenario for examples: After 5 innings the game is tied 5-5. The sixth inning begins 1 hour and 45 minutes after play started. (An inning begins immediately after the 3rd out of the previous inning is recorded). The sixth inning begins at that point.

Example 1: The visiting team scores 4 runs in the top of the sixth inning to take a 9-5 lead. The home team's first batter steps to the plate at the 2 hour mark after play began. The game ends per the drop dead rule. The sixth inning was not completed. The score reverts back to the last fully completed inning – the fifth inning – and the game score is a 5-5 tie.

Example 2: The visiting team scores 2 runs in the top of the sixth inning to take a 7-5 lead. The home team scores 2 runs in the bottom of the sixth inning without an out being recorded. With no outs, the next batter steps to the plate just as the 2 hour drop dead limit is reached. The home team has tied the game. The game score is a 7-7 tie.

Example 3: The visiting team scores 2 runs in the top of the sixth inning to take a 7-5 lead. The home team scores three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning, with the third run crossing the plate 1 hour and 58 minutes after the

game began. The drop dead time limit has not yet been reached. No new inning may begin because more than 1 hour 45 minutes has passed since the game began. The home team wins because it has taken the lead in the bottom of the game's last inning. The game score is 8-7.

- d. For end of season playoff tournament games the International Tie Breaker will be used if time has expired and the game is tied (games cannot end in a tie).

INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER: This rule to be used as follows:

At the top and bottom of each extra inning, each team starts with a runner on second base. The base runner will be the last scheduled batter of the inning (if every player were to bat once). Game continues playing regular rules until the tie is broken.

7. PACE OF PLAY:

- a. There will be a two-minute time limit between half innings to keep the games moving.
- b. There will be a maximum of 5 warm up pitches allowed between innings.
- c. A mandatory pinch runner will be used when a scheduled catcher is on base with 2 outs. The catcher must be ready by the third out (unless they were the last batter)
- d. A pinch runner may also be used for the pitcher scheduled to pitch in the next inning, but is not mandatory.
- e. The substitute runner(s) will be the last recorded out(s) of the inning

8. Pitching

- a. A pitcher is allowed to pitch any part of 4 innings per 7 inning game.
- b. A pitcher must be removed from an inning if she hits 3 batters in the same inning (this inning counts as an inning pitched for both pitchers).
- c. One pitch shall constitute an inning for a pitcher.
- d. A pitcher may return to pitch in subsequent innings if she has not pitched in any part of 4 innings.
- e. Coach may make a trip to the pitcher to talk with the pitcher and team. On the second trip to the pitcher in the same inning, the pitcher will need to be removed from the winning. The pitcher may be switch to a position on the field as long as rule 2 is in compliance. At the end of an inning, the coach's trip to the mound resets allowing a coach to visit the same pitcher for upcoming innings.

9. Base Running

- a. Runner is allowed to take a lead-off after the pitch has crossed the plate
- b. Runners may advance on an overthrow at any base. Runners are limited to 1 base per overthrow. If the overthrow goes out of play (past the fence lines) then the runner advances to the base they were going to plus one more (1 + 1).
- c. The 'continuation play' is not allowed; i.e. a walked runner cannot advance to 2nd base.
- d. Sliding rules will be enforced.
- e. The **LOOK-BACK RULE** is in effect when the pitcher has possession of the ball (e.g. has the ball in their hand or, glove,) within the circle. Any runner(s) in motion may continue without stopping or may stop once; any runner who is stopped or stops their motion must immediately move directly back to the last base touched or attempt to advance to the next base. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, they may not move off that base. A batter-runner who overruns first and does not without delay attempt to advance to second is committed to return to first and stop. The runner, off

base, may not stand motionless otherwise the Umpire will signal the runner out and the ball is declared dead.

- f. **Avoidance of Contact:** All base runners must attempt to avoid a collision with a fielder in possession of the ball, or about to field a batted or thrown ball. Any runner who remains on her feet and crashes into a fielder making the play in these situations, whether intentional or not, shall be called out for interference. Furthermore, if the act is determined to be flagrant or malicious, the offender will be restricted to the bench for the duration of the game. Runners have three options to avoid a collision: 1) slide into the base they are going to, 2) step around a fielder, or 3) pull up and allow themselves to be tagged. NOTE: A collision that occurs when an errant throw draws a defensive player into the path of the runner is considered incidental contact. It is not interference, and no penalty will be imposed to either the defensive or offensive player. Conversely, a fielder may not impede the progress of a runner who is legally running bases while not in possession of the ball, not about to field a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball. Obstruction will be called in these situations, and the appropriate ruling will be made.

10. Stealing bases

- a. Unlimited stealing including home.
- b. One, two, or three runners can steal at the same time. Stealing is not limited to a batter.
- c. If a runner leaves early on a steal attempt, the team will be provided one warning. If it happens a second time the runner will be called out.

11. Home team is official scorebook. Win/loss records/standing shall be kept at this level. The season shall be completed with a double-elimination tournament. Tiebreakers will be head to head record, and then head to head run differential.

12. Pitchers shall pitch from a distance of 37' from home plate, with 60' baselines. The pitchers circle is an 8' radius with pitcher mound at the center. This level shall use a 12" regulation softball. The home team is responsible for setting up the field approximately 30 minutes before game time.

13. The infield fly rule **does** apply at this level.

14. The dropped third strike rule **does not** apply at this level.

15. The league shall provide patched umpires.

- a. Rule clarifications between both head coaches and the umpire shall be conducted prior to the start of the game. Only head coaches may speak to the umpire regarding rule issues during the game and only in the presence of the opposing coach.
- b. Questioning the umpire's call is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will not be tolerated by the league.
- c. Coaches or fans questioning the umpire's call will be at risk of forfeiting the game or removal from the coaching responsibilities.
- d. Coaches need to remind parents this is a game and will be at risk of being ejected from the playing field if unsportsmanlike conduct is presented.