

2017 Athens Sandlot Softball Local Rules

Middle School Softball Division- *Board Approved*

General: These are the regular season rules that have been agreed upon by the Athens Sandlot Baseball League Board. NSA rules shall be followed otherwise. ASBL is not affiliated with NSA.

Age Guidelines: A players must be in the 6th, 7th or 8th grade to play in the Middle School division AND be 14 years old or younger on or before January 1 of this year.

Teams Allowed: Local teams are allowed to bring a pre-formed team into the league. Teams brought into the league must abide by the age guidelines and other rules set forth by ASBL. Teams formed outside of ASBL are not covered by ASBL insurance.

Officials: The umpire is in charge of the game, and will handle all appeals on the field. Only the head coach may address the umpire to resolve any questions. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of his/her players, spectators, and coaches. Negative or antagonizing “chatter” is not allowed. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** The umpire may give a warning, but can, at any time, eject any coach, player, or spectator. Profanity is not tolerated and may result in immediate ejection from the park.

I. Start & End of the Game:

A. Line up cards. Each coach shall prepare a team line up card to include:

Batting line up
Starting pitcher
Members of the team that may be arriving late and may play
Coaches names. (No more than 4 coaches may be used during games.)

B. Pre-Game Warm ups, line ups, line up cards and protocol:

20 minutes prior to the start time: Visitor team warm ups
10 minutes prior to the start time: Home team warm ups
5 minutes prior to the start time: Line up cards delivered to the chief umpire.
Failure to finish a team warm up is not an excuse to delay the on-time start the game.
On-field pre-game warm-ups may be altered or disallowed due to games running behind schedule, weather or darkness.
First pitch: Official start time shall be called by the umpire.

C. If a team cannot field 8 players within 10 minutes of the scheduled start of the game, the ASBL Board has determined this team shall forfeit the game. A forfeit game may be played with less than 8 players, however, the score will not count, and the only item that will be recorded in the official score book will be “innings pitched.”

D. The City of Athens will notify ASBL if the field is not available for use because of field conditions. If the City has approved the field for use but the weather or field conditions are poor, the team coaches must both agree the field is acceptable. Once the game is turned over to the Chief Umpire, only the Chief Umpire may end a game for weather, darkness or time.

E. Games will be 7 innings. Ties will be resolved in extra innings. A game is official after 4 complete innings (3½ if home team is winning).

F. No new inning shall begin after 1 hour 30 minutes from the official start time of weeknight games, 1 hour 45 minutes on weekends, or within 20 minutes of sunset. Sunset times will be posted weekly.

G. There is a 2-1/2 hour time limit on any game that does not interfere with another “game”.

I. Start & End of the Game: cont.

H. Mercy Rule: A 12 run differential after 3 completed innings (2 ½ if the home team is ahead), 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings. The game is declared complete, the leading team is awarded a win.

II. Scorekeeping:

- A. The home team shall be responsible for keeping the official score book. First pitch time shall be noted as called by the umpire.
- B. The official scorekeeper is to record the names of the umpires.
- C. All score books are to include the record of all pitchers and the number of innings pitched.
- D. Both teams are to confirm the score at the end of each half inning with the umpire.
- E. The umpire will turn in the Game Summary Sheet to the concession stand after the game. The umpire and both coaches must sign the summary sheet.

III. Pitching:

- A. The umpire shall issue a warning to any pitcher and the coaches of both teams if the pitcher hits 2 batters in one inning. Coaches shall notify the Chief Umpire if they have such a concern. Hitting three batters in one inning or after hitting four batters in the game, or if in the opinion of the Chief Umpire the pitcher does not have adequate control, the pitcher may be removed even if it means more than 5 pitchers will be used in the game.
- B. A pitcher can re-enter once during a game.
- C. The “windmill” style of pitch is preferred but the “slingshot” style is allowed.
- D. Both feet must be in contact with the pitchers’ plate at the start of the pitch.
- E. No backward step is allowed, but the pitcher may shift her weight backward.
- F. Middle School Softball Division will pitch from 43’ and use a 12” ball.
- G. Pitchers (starters and replacements) will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches per inning.

IV. Batting:

- A. Run Rule: In the Middle School Softball division, there will be a 6 run per inning run limit. Any runs scored after 6 runs, on the same play, will count. There is no run limit in the 6th or 7th innings.
- B. Bunting is permitted.
- C. Batter **may** advance on a “dropped” 3rd strike, but only if 1st base is unoccupied prior to the pitch or if there are two outs.

V. Fielding:

- A. Maximum of 9 players are allowed on the field on defense.
- B. Each team shall assign a coach to insure the catcher is ready at the end of the inning with a mask/helmet and catchers glove and be ready to take the field. If there are 2 outs and the catcher is on base, you should use a bench player, if available, or the last player that made an out, as a pinch runner, in order to get the catcher ready.

V. Fielding: cont.

- C. The infield fly rule is in effect. A fair fly ball that could be caught with **ordinary effort** by an infielder when 1st & 2nd, or 1st, 2nd, & 3rd bases are occupied with less than 2 outs. The batter is out, but base runners may advance at their own risk.

VI. Running:

- A. Stealing **will be allowed**. Runners may steal any base upon release of the pitch.
- B. Runners may advance to another base, at their own risk, on any overthrows.
- C. During a play initiated by a batted ball, the play is over when **forward progress** stops, and no further advance of any runner is allowed once the defensive team controls the ball in front of the lead runner and forces the runner at (or to retreat to) an unoccupied base. Runners must occupy a base when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitchers' circle. **Forward progress** is a judgment call by the umpire.
- D. **Slide or Avoid Rule:** On any play on a runner at 2nd, 3rd, or home, for the purpose of avoiding collisions, **the runner must slide or otherwise avoid contact with the fielder**. Any collisions will result in the runner being called out and the ball will be dead.
- E. If there are 2 outs and the catcher is on base, you should use the last player that made an out as a pinch runner in order to get the catcher ready.
- F. In the event of an injury, the ball is dead; the runners receive the base they are headed to.

VII. Substitutions:

Coaches shall notify the Chief Umpire of:

- All pitcher changes
- Arrival of late players who will be put entered into the line up (end of line up only).
- Any injured or sick player that is being removed from the line up.

VIII. Home Team:

- A. The schedule will determine home team and the home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.
- B. The home team shall drag the playing field and fill in any divots around the pitchers rubber, bases, etc., after the game as well as remove and or replace any rain tarps for the pitcher's mound and home plate areas.

IX. Uniforms/Equipment:

- A. Complete uniforms must be worn, as supplied by Athens Sandlot Baseball. Hats must be worn facing forward; shirts must be tucked in. No modifications of uniforms are allowed- example: cutting off sleeves, adding names, etc.