

# AGSA PIGTAIL RULES

Spring 2021

## Rules Summary:

- **Game length:** No new inning can start after 75 minutes
  - **Umpires:** Yes, when available.
    - If official umpire, they make all calls
      - Umpire can call a meeting between head coaches to discuss a play and a rule but the Umpire has final call
    - If no umpire, base coaches make calls at bases and defensive coach makes calls at plate.
  - **Defensive Coaches:** One in the Outfield.
  - **Offensive Coaches:** 1B and 3B base coaches, and the coach-pitcher.
  - **Stealing:** Not permitted
  - **Outs:** 3 per side
  - **Max. runs per inning:** 5 coach pitch games, 4 kid pitch games
  - **Ball:** 11" Soft
  - **# of players on Field:** 6 infield, 4 outfield
    - Outfield must be in the grass and can run in after a ball is placed in play
  - **Pitching:**
    - Coach Pitch - No Tee.
    - 2nd Grade only - 6 swings or called strikes by the umpire using a conservative strike zone
    - 3rd Grade only - 3 swings or called strikes by the umpire using a liberal strike zone for kid pitch
    - 3rd Grade only - Kid Pitch will be for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
  - **Mound:** 35 feet
  - **Batting Order:** Continuous
  - **Called balls:** Not in Coach Pitch. Yes, in Kid Pitch
  - **Foul Balls:** Unlimited
  - **Overthrows:** No extra bases
  - **Interference:** Any ball that hits a player, base, umpire (on the field), or coach is a LIVE ball.
  - **Hit to outfield:**
    - For 2nd grade teams, run until ball in control infield as determined by umpire or 1st base coach if no umpire. Regardless of when ball is in control, each base runner can advance no more than 2 bases on each hit.
    - For 3rd grade teams, run until ball in control in infield as determined by umpire or 1st base coach if no umpire.
- 1) Pigtail League Objectives
    - a) Introduce girls to the basic rules of softball, such as strikes, outs and scoring.
    - b) Maximize player development of fundamentals (hitting, fielding, throwing).
    - c) Keep the game moving at a decent pace.
    - d) Introduce older Pigtail girls to pitching.
    - e) Make the environment positive and fun.
    - f) Leave as many girls as possible wanting to return to play the following season.
  - 2) Umpires
    - a) The AGSA Umpire Coordinator will attempt to schedule an umpire for every game.
    - b) In the event that an umpire is not available, a offensive coach will call pitches and plays at home and the offensive 1st and 3rd base coaches will call plays at 1st, 2nd & 3rd base.
  - 3) Game Start

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- a) Game start times are determined by the Master Pigtail Schedule.
- b) "Batter up" shall be called by the umpire. Umpire may begin calling balls and strikes at that time. Umpire shall keep official time.
- c) Exception to 3.a – The game may be delayed for up to fifteen (15) minutes to await the arrival of additional players to satisfy the minimum player requirement. For Pigtail, a 5 Players minimum is required to start a game. (Catcher is not required.)
- 4) Forfeits
  - a) Any team that cannot field the minimum (5) number of players within fifteen (15) minutes of the designated game start time shall forfeit the game for official purposes. Teams shall proceed with an unofficial game and may "loan" players to the team that is short in order to create a better experience. All other rules shall remain in effect for the unofficial game.
- 5) Game Length
  - a) A game shall be terminated and considered official under the earlier to occur of the following:
    - i) After 6 complete innings (or 5½ innings if the home team is ahead)
    - ii) Time Limit.
      - (1) Regular Season: No New Inning may start after 75 minutes. Time is kept by the umpire. Ties are allowed. No Drop Dead rule.
      - (2) Post Season (playoffs & championship): Must have a winner. See 5.b - Tie breaker rule.
    - iii) Inclement Weather Rule – In the event of inclement weather (as defined below), a game shall be considered official after 2 complete innings or 1½ innings with the home team leading. The official final score shall revert back to the last complete inning unless the home team is ahead or tied the away team in that inning. Games that are cancelled due to inclement weather will be rescheduled except when considered official or when precluded by season or post season schedule limitations or time/field limitations.
    - iv) In his/her sole discretion, an umpire shall terminate any game when the conditions of play (for example, rain, hail, field conditions) unreasonably place any player or other person at risk of injury
    - v) An umpire shall immediately terminate any game when informed of the observation of lightning by any person.
    - vi) Darkness Rule – In the event of a game being called because of darkness (as determined by the umpire in his/her sole discretion), the game shall be official after 2 complete innings or 1½ innings with the home team leading. The official final score shall revert back to the last complete inning unless the home team is ahead or tied the away team in that inning. Ties are allowed.
  - b) Tiebreaker Rule
    - i) Regular season games: Ties are allowed. No tiebreaker rule.
    - ii) Post season games: Must have a winner. If the game is tied at the end of regulation time, the international tiebreaker rule will be used, as follows: at the beginning of each half inning, the player who had the last completed at bat assumes a position as a base runner on 2nd base. This continues so long as the game is tied at the end of each full inning.
- 6) Maximum Runs per Inning
  - a) A team may score no more than five (5) runs per inning in coach pitch. It will be four (4) runs per inning in kid pitch. This rule applies for the entire game, including the last inning.
- 7) Distance of Pitching Rubber and Bases
  - a) The pitching rubber shall be thirty-five (35) feet from home plate.
  - b) Bases shall be sixty (60) feet apart.
- 8) Number of Players
  - a) Throughout the duration of a game when batting or in the field, a team must have a minimum of five (5) players (inclusive of pitcher or player at the pitcher position).
  - b) If possible, a team must field ten (10) players but not more than ten (10) players (inclusive of a pitcher and a catcher). Only 10 Players may be in the field at one time.
  - c) A team shall use up to a maximum of six (6) infielders (inclusive of a pitcher and a catcher) and four (4) outfielders (unless more outfielders are mutually agreed upon).

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- 9) Bunting
  - a) Bunting is only allowed when facing a player pitcher. An offered bunt will be called a strike. A foul tip bunt on the third called strike is a strike and the batter is out.
  - b) Bunting is NOT allowed during coach pitch situations.
- 10) Infield fly rule – not in effect.
- 11) Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike – not in effect.
- 12) Stealing and Sliding
  - a) Stealing is NOT permitted in Pigtail League.
  - b) Sliding is permitted (feet first only). Coaches are encouraged to seek out guidance on instructing players in the proper sliding technique to avoid injuries. It is also important for coaches to instruct defensive players on where to position themselves to make a play on a baserunner while avoiding collisions.
  - c) Leading off is NOT permitted.
- 13) Pitching – *Pigtail West – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teams***
  - a) Coach Pitch only
    - i) Coach must begin with plant foot no further forward than the pitcher circle (27 feet – 8 feet in front of the rubber). As players improve, Coaches are encouraged to move back towards the rubber. Once the pitcher has released the ball there will be no further coaching of the batter (no telling them to swing or not swing).
    - ii) The umpire will call swinging strikes as well as called (non-swinging) strikes using a conservative strike zone. Fouls are strikes unless it is the final strike.
    - iii) There is no walking or Hit-by-Pitch.
- 14) Pitching – *Pigtail East – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teams***
  - a) Coach Pitch
    - i) Coach must begin with plant foot no further forward than the pitcher circle (27 feet – 8 feet in front of the rubber). As players improve, Coach is encouraged to move back towards the rubber. Once the pitcher has released the ball there will be no further coaching of the batter (no telling them to swing or not swing).
    - ii) The umpire will call swinging strikes as well as called (non-swinging) strikes using a conservative strike zone. Fouls are strikes unless it is the third strike.
    - iii) There is no walking or Hit-by-Pitch.
  - b) Kid Pitch -
    - i) Innings 2 and 3 will be kid pitch.
    - ii) If the batter hits the ball, it is a live ball. If the umpire calls 3 strikes, it is an out.
    - iii) 4 Balls will be a walk as will be a Hit-by-Pitch.
    - iv) After the 2 walks (HBP counts as a walk) the Coach Pitcher will take over for the Kid Pitcher after 4 balls (or HBP) on a batter.
    - v) The strike zone for a Kid Pitch will be a liberal strike zone.
- 15) Strike Zone
  - a) The strike zone is defined as the area above home plate, from the batter's armpit to their knees.
  - b) A liberal strike zone enlarges the normal strike zone on all sides by the width of the ball (approximately 3½ inches). This effectively increases all dimensions by approximately 7 inches.
- 16) Speed-Up Rules
  - a) Courtesy runners are recommended for the following inning's catcher and pitcher with two (2) team outs.
  - b) Innings may start before the catcher is ready in order to speed up the game.
  - c) Infield practice between innings is at the umpire's discretion but shall be limited to the time allowed to the pitcher for warming up. The umpire may begin calling balls and strikes after two (2) minutes.
- 17) Home Team
  - a) The Home Team uses the dugout along first base

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- b) Home team keeps the official score. The home team coach is responsible for reporting the game score through the SIPlay app or team website, or as an alternative, to the Pigtail Commissioner.
- 18) Game Rainouts
- a) See 5.b.iii above.
- 19) Player Safety Gear
- a) All players in the field must be wearing a glove.
  - b) The catcher must wear full protective equipment (to include shin guards, chest protector, catcher's helmet/mask).
  - c) Batter or player on base must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with facemask.
- 20) Ball Specifications
- a) All Pigtail divisions Games will use the 11" Easton Incrediball (softie ball).
- 21) Obstruction
- a) The base runner unequivocally owns the baseline.
  - b) A defensive player cannot intentionally block any baseline, base, or home plate unless she is in possession of the ball.
  - c) A defensive player must get out of the way of the runner unless she is fielding a hit ball or she is drawn into the baseline or path of the runner by the act of actually receiving a throw at a base/plate (that does not mean anticipating or waiting for a throw to be made).
  - d) If the defensive player is actually receiving a throw at a base/plate, the base runner must avoid contact with the defensive player. If the runner goes into the base standing and causes serious contact with the fielder, the umpire may call the runner out.
  - e) Some collisions may be unavoidable. Use good judgment and make every effort to avoid collisions. A base runner that is perceived by the umpire to have intentionally "run over" another player shall be called out and possibly ejected from the game based on umpire discretion.
- 22) Interference
- a) A base runner must avoid contact with any hit ball and the defensive player attempting to field the ball.
    - i) If the base runner makes contact with a hit ball, while advancing to a base, first, they will be called out.
    - ii) If the base runner makes contact with a ball after it touches a defensive player, and is safe at the base, they will be safe.
    - iii) If a base runner purposely interferes with a ball that changes the outcome of the play (picks up the ball, kicks it away from the defense), the umpire will call them out.
  - b) The runner may run out of the baseline to avoid contact with the defensive player fielding a hit ball or a defensive player that is drawn into their path or the baseline by any act of actually receiving a throw.
  - c) A base runner may not run out of the baseline to avoid a tag.
  - d) A batter must get out of the way of the catcher if any play is being made at home plate. If the batter interferes with the catcher's ability to field a hit ball, receive a throw, or otherwise make a play at home plate, the batter may be called out and/or the runner advancing to home plate returned to 3rd base (both of which are at the discretion of the umpire based on perceived intent and recidivisms).
- 23) Offense
- a) Players must bat in the batting order shared by her coach with the opposing coach.
  - b) Players shall bat in a continuous batting order. The leadoff batter for each inning after the first inning is the batter that follows the last batter to complete their at bat in the previous inning.
  - c) Every player shall be included in the batting order. Late arriving players shall be placed at the end of the batting order.
  - d) A batter must bat within the batter's box.
  - e) A batter shall not throw the bat. The first infraction shall result in a warning from the player's coach. Subsequent infractions, the player will be called out.

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- f) It is the duty of the batter to avoid being hit by a pitch. No batter shall be awarded a base for being hit by a pitch in coach pitch. HBP in kid pitch will be awarded a base.
  - g) No batter shall be awarded a base on balls in coach pitch. A walk in kid pitch will be awarded a base.
  - h) A base runner may overrun 1<sup>st</sup> base only. All other bases, the runner may be tagged out if they are off the base.
  - i) Runners (including the batter runner) may take only one base on a hit that stays in the infield.
  - j) Hits to the outfield
    - i) A hit to the outfield occurs when the ball passes uninterrupted to the outfield.
    - ii) For second grade teams, runners are allowed to advance one extra base but may be thrown out at the next base. If the runner is further than halfway to the next base when time is called they will be given that base, if less than halfway they will be returned to the previous base.
    - iii) For third grade teams, runners may advance until the ball is in control in the infield. Runners may be thrown out at any base. Runners not on a base at the moment that the defense gains control of the ball in the infield are entitled to take the next base, but they are also liable to be put out either advancing to the next base or retreating to the previous base. At any point that a runner is on base after defensive infield control of the ball, that is the base they must stay on. If the runner is further than halfway to the next base when time is called they will be given that base, if less than halfway they will be returned to the previous base. Overthrow errors to 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> from the outfield in an attempt to make a force or tag play at those bases will be considered control in the infield if the ball crosses into foul territory.
  - k) One base runner may not pass another baserunner that is ahead of them.
  - l) Botched Plays - Any play to retire a runner at any base or return the ball to the pitcher that results in the defense losing control of the ball is considered a dead ball.
  - m) An inning is over when three (3) outs are achieved by defending team or five runs (four runs in kid pitch) are scored by the offensive team.
  - n) Umpire shall be responsible for making all calls on bases.
  - o) Other than the designated coach pitcher at the appropriate times and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches, no coach may be on the playing field or on the sidelines whether along the infield or outfield.
- 24) Defense
- a) No player may sit more than one consecutive inning per game, unless injured or exhibiting poor sportsmanship. Coaches are encouraged to give all players equal playing time.
  - b) Coaches are encouraged to play all players at different positions.
  - c) The designated outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass when the ball crosses home plate. If there is not any grass, then the players should be positioned beyond an invisible arc which starts ten (10) feet behind first base, continues ten (10) feet behind second base and ends ten (10) feet behind third base.
  - d) The defensive team is allowed a maximum of 1 coach in the outfield.
- 25) Other
- a) Coaches must immediately report any incidents (including, but not limited to, injuries, umpire abuse, etc.) to the Pigtail Commissioner.
  - b) No player, coach and/or parent shall argue with, assault, berate, or otherwise harass or intimidate any umpire. No player, coach and/or parent shall unduly influence or question any call of any umpire except as otherwise provided herein. In full force and effect is a "hands off" policy by any player, coach and/or parent with respect to any umpire. Any call by a umpire is presumed correct. Violators will face penalties, including, but not limited to, immediate suspension from coaching duties or playing time or being suspended from the field/stands area for future games. Any problem with an umpire must be immediately reported by the coach to the Pigtail Commissioner. Any corrective action taken by the Pigtail Commissioner shall not alter the outcome of a game but shall be for instructional purposes only.
  - c) Coaches are responsible for encouraging their players, other coaches, and players' parents to maintain the highest standards of sportsmanlike conduct.
- 26) Post Season Play (Spring Only)
- a) For spring only, game scores will be reported, and standings will be maintained.

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- b) Scores are to be reported by the home team by the end of the day that the game is played using the SIPlay app or the SIPlay team website. If technical difficulties are encountered, scores may be emailed to the Pigtail Commissioner.
  - c) Standings are automatically maintained by the SIPlay system and are available on the app, team website and AGSA website.
  - d) Standings will be determined by point total. Wins will be counted as 2 points. Ties will be counted as 1 point. Ties are broken using the following methods, in the listed order: head-to-head record, total run differential (total run for minus total runs against), and finally runs for.
  - e) The exact playoff format shall be determined by the Pigtail Commissioner and will depend on number of teams and field availability. Tournament seeding will be based on regular season standings.
- 27) The Pigtail Commissioner reserves the right to add to, amend, change, modify and/or clarify the above rules during the course of the season. Any such amendments, changes, modifications and/or clarifications shall have prospective effect and shall not be retroactively applied.
- 28) The effective date of the above rules is March 21, 2021.