

AGSA Ponytail League Rules 9/1/2021

1. GOVERNING BODY FOR AGSA FASTPITCH SOFTBALL

AGSA play is governed by the rules set forth by the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA Rules) with the following modifications.

2. AGSA LEAGUE COMMISSIONER AUTHORITY

The Ponytail Commissioner shall have final decision authority regarding all interpretations, questions and disputes regarding these rules.

3. RULES SUMMARY FOR UMPIRES

The following list summarizes the rules most likely to be discussed in pre-game conferences among umpires and head coaches. In cases of conflicts between this summary and the rules themselves, the rules govern.

3.1. 80 minutes no new inning. No Dropdead time

3.2. 4 runs per inning limit, all innings.

3.3. After 3 walks/HBP, coach comes in after 4 balls. Strike count carries over. Ump calls strikes for coaches. Batter always gets the base on a HBP, even after the 3 walks/HBP

3.4. Stealing of 2nd and 3rd only. 1 base per pitch on steals. Lead when ball crosses front of home. No steals on walked/HBP batter.

3.5. No Dropped 3rd, no infield fly.

3.6. Outfield & hits...all you can get until the ball reaches the pitcher in the pitching circle

3.7. Pitchers may pitch in at most 2 innings. If a pitcher enters in the middle of an inning that will count as an inning.

4. PRE- AND POST-GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaches shall work together to determine dugout assignments for the game. The home team shall line the field before the game, but the visiting team shall assist if requested. The home team shall provide the game balls. Both teams shall clean their dugouts and perform any necessary field maintenance after the game. The winning team shall report the final score of the game to the Commissioner, or enter into the SIPlay app, within 24 hours after the game ends.

5. GAME START

5.1. Head Coaches shall hold a "plate meeting" with the umpire a few minutes prior to the designated start time. The game clock shall begin promptly at the designated start time or at the

conclusion of the plate meeting (whichever comes first). The umpire may begin calling balls and strikes at that time.

5.2. The only exception to this rule is that the game may be delayed for up to 15 minutes to await the arrival of additional players to satisfy the minimum player requirement. The start time shall be recorded in the game record books of the competing teams. Such delays do not affect the time limit rule, coaches shall meet with the umpire prior to game time and start the clock as close to “game time” as possible.

6. FORFEITS

Any team that cannot field the minimum number of players within 15 minutes of the designated start time shall forfeit the game for official purposes. In the event that a team forfeits its game, it is hoped that the opposing team would provide enough players to balance the teams to allow for an unofficial game to be played. In that event, all other rules remain in effect.

7. GAME “RAINOUTS”

7.1. Games that are canceled or called due to rain, snow, or poor field conditions will be rescheduled, except when precluded by season or post-season schedule limitations.

7.2. In the event of rain during a game, it is up to the umpire and/or field supervisor to decide at what point the game should be suspended or called due to rain. Lightning automatically ends the game. A game in progress may be suspended for rain (or other causes) for no more than 30 minutes. A game is considered “officially completed” if and only if the game is suspended after at least 2 complete innings of play (1½ innings of play if the home team is ahead). Should the game resume, it must proceed with revised timing – with NO NEW INNING beginning with less than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled next game time. (e.g. a 6pm game that is delayed may not start a new inning after 7:45 assuming there is an 8pm game scheduled).

8. GAME LENGTH

8.1. Regular Season

8.1.1. A game shall be terminated and considered official after six innings (5 ½ innings if the home team is ahead).

8.1.2. No New Inning : Do not start a new inning after 80 minutes of play. However, innings begun before 80 minutes shall immediately be considered complete if the home team takes the lead in the bottom of an inning that has gone beyond the 80 minute mark, or the maximum number of runs have been reached or if three outs have been recorded. Ties are allowed. (If both coaches and the umpire agree, play may continue until the time limit 105mins in order to give players – especially less proficient players an opportunity to continue

to work on skills but the official score will be the score per the official time rules.) Once the game ends players shall immediately leave the field.

8.1.3. Dropdead : A 'dropdead' time limit will be invoked at 1 hour and 45 minutes unless the home team is batting with a chance to win the game. (105 minutes).

8.1.4. If a game is terminated by inclement weather, as determined by the umpire, the game will be treated as complete and official if and only if 2 complete innings (1 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) have been played. Games that are terminated by inclement weather before 2 complete innings (or 1 ½ if the home team is ahead) are treated as incomplete and shall be rescheduled if possible; such games will start over from the beginning.

8.1.5. In the event that the game ends before an inning is completed (due to hitting drop dead time, inclement weather, home team ahead at the end of the half inning, or any other reason), the official score will be the score at the end of the last completed inning.

8.2. Postseason Games - Same as regular season game except the following:

8.2.1. Games cannot end in a tie. Extra innings are allowed, within reason, by the Umpire.

8.2.2. If a postseason game is tied at the end of regulation time then the following tiebreaker rule will be applied for all subsequent innings: at the start of each half inning, the batter that last completed their at bat will be placed on 2nd base as a runner.

8.2.3. If the score remains tied after all extra innings permitted by the umpire, then the game is void and shall be rescheduled by the Commissioner.

9. DISTANCE OF PITCHING RUBBER AND BASES

The pitching rubber shall be 35 feet from home plate. Bases shall be 60 feet apart.

10. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

10.1. Maximum of 10 players including pitcher and catcher may play defense in the field at one time. A team may use a maximum of four outfielders (all on the grass at the time of the pitch) and a maximum of six infielders.

10.2. Minimum of 6 players are required.

10.3. Game may be delayed for up to 15 minutes to await the arrival of additional players to satisfy the minimum player requirement. Minutes used in this grace period will be counted against the time allotted for the game.

11. SCORING

A team may score no more than FOUR (4) runs per inning. This rule applies to all innings including the last. Ties are allowed.

12. BUNTING

12.1. Bunting is allowed; when there are 2 strikes on the batter, any attempted bunt that results in a foul ball is an out.

13. INFIELD FLY RULE

The infield fly rule does not apply . The ball remains live with all runners in jeopardy of being put out.

14. DROPPED 3RD STRIKE

The dropped third strike rule does not apply . Whether or not the 3rd strike is caught, the batter is out. However, base runners may advance at their own risk.

15. BASE RUNNING

15.1. On a live batted ball, runners may take as many bases as possible until the ball is controlled in the pitching circle by the pitcher.

15.1.1 A runner is out when running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs more than three feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder. A runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the base path in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

15.2. LOOK-BACK RULE (Rule 8, Section 7 and Rules Supplement, Section 34) ASA Rules state when any play is concluded and the pitcher gains control of the ball inside the pitching circle, all runners on base may stop once but then must immediately commit to a course of action. That is to say: they must immediately advance to the next base or they must immediately return to the base they most recently occupied. If the pitcher reacts to the runner's commitment to a course of action by leaving the circle, faking a throw, throwing the ball, or throwing the ball away during that defensive action, play is live again and all runners may advance at their own risk. In that case, the look-back rule does not apply again until that play has concluded and the pitcher regains control of the ball inside the pitching circle. Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to the original base after the pitcher has the ball in the circle results in the runner being called out. That covers 99% of this rule. For additional information, clarification, and nuance, please refer to the official ASA rulebook.

15.3. LEADING OFF

15.3.1. Runners cannot leave a base until the pitched ball crosses the front plane of home plate.

15.3.2. Violators are returned to the original base. Umpires will call runners out for repeated violations by the team

15.4. STEALING

15.4.1. Runners starting at first base or second base are entitled to steal one base per pitch with liability to be put out.

15.4.2. Runners starting at third base may not steal home but are liable to be put out if they are off the base.

15.4.3. Runners are NOT entitled to advance more than one base per pitch even in the event of an overthrow at any base.

15.4.4. A runner attempting to advance beyond the one base they are entitled to steal may be put out while between bases.

15.4.5. Stealing is NOT permitted on Coach pitch (when the ball crosses the plate).

15.4.6. The base stealing rules do not apply when a pitched ball is hit into play.

15.5. SLIDING

15.5.1. Sliding is optional (and encouraged) and at the discretion of the coaches and players. This is different from ASA rules; please bring to attention of umpires.

15.5.2. Because this is optional, fielders and catchers cannot block bases or home plate.

15.5.3. Head first sliding is NOT permitted unless it is a dive back to the current base they are occupying. If a runner performs a head first slide into a stolen base, they will be called out.

15.6. Awarded bases will apply to all runners. This includes an overthrow into dead ball territory.

15.7. Runners can only score on:

15.7.1. A batted ball

15.7.2. A base on balls or hit batter with bases loaded

15.7.3. An awarded base when the ball goes out of play to include a pitch that goes out of play

15.7.4. An illegal pitch

16. PITCHING

16.1. No pitcher may pitch more than 6 outs or appear in more than 2 innings per game, whichever comes first (e.g. if a pitcher gives up 4 runs and the inning ends, that counts as one inning; if a pitcher faces 1 batter in an inning, that counts as 1 of the 2 innings).

16.2. ALL players and coaches MUST pitch from the 35' rubber. No exceptions.

16.3. Legal Pitching Delivery is very specific and is thoroughly defined within ASA Rulebook. Here are common things that make a pitch illegal.

- Starting delivery with the ball in the glove / not starting delivery with ball and glove apart.
- Not touching ball to glove prior to delivery. In short, the pitcher starts with the hands separated and then brings them together for not less than 1 second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing it.
- Making 2 "presentations" / stopping or reversing forward motion after separating hands.

16.4. COACH PITCH after 3 walks/HBP – A maximum of 3 "base on balls" (walks) or hit by pitch (HBP) will be allowed per inning (i.e. 2 HBP & 1 walk = 3) . For subsequent batters; once the batter's count reaches 4 balls, the coach of the hitting team will pitch from the 35 foot pitching plate, and inherit the strike count only, not the ball count as coach pitchers cannot walk a batter. The coach pitcher will pitch until the batter hits the ball into the field of play ending in a hit, an error, or an out. The player pitcher then resumes pitching as normal for the next batter, When a coach is pitching, the player pitcher must start from a fielding position inside the pitching circle. Coach pitches with the game ball from the 35' rubber. No more than one ball will be allowed on the field at any given time and will be managed by the umpire. The play ends when the player pitcher gains possession of the ball (following the lookback rule). The coach must get out of the way of hit balls and plays in the field. Interference by the coach pitcher will result in an out assessed on the runner closest to home. Hit By Pitch that occurs AFTER the 3 Walk/HBP maximum DOES entitle the batter to first base. Batter is not awarded 1st if HBP during coach pitch.

16.5. STRIKE ZONE

There shall be a liberal strike zone (at the discretion of the umpire). This is intended to encourage offensive aggressiveness (that is to say, to encourage batters to arrive at the plate with the intent of finding a pitch they can hit). It is hoped, however, that only pitches that could be hit will be called strikes.

17. BATTING ORDER

Batters will bat in a continuous batting order. ALL players must bat, whether or not they are in the defensive line-up.

18. SPEED-UP RULES

18.1. Courtesy runners are mandatory for catcher or pitcher on base with 2 team outs. (The catcher / pitcher is defined as the player who will play at the catcher's or

pitcher's position in the following "defensive" portion of the inning).

18.2. Infield practice between innings is at the umpire's discretion but shall be limited to the time allowed to the pitcher for warming up. Umpire may begin calling balls and strikes after 3 minutes between innings.

18.3. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball". Failure to do so will result in a ball called by the umpire.

18.4. At the beginning or each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than 5 pitches. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be awarded a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of 5. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same inning will not receive warm-up pitches.

18.5. A strike is called by the umpire if the batter does not take the batter's position within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire. After three consecutive times, the batter will be called out.

18.6. A ball will be called by the umpire when the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.

19. PLAYER SAFETY GEAR

19.1. Catchers shall wear a chest protector, catcher's helmet, shin guards and mask with integral extended throat protector or a separate "swinging" type throat guard during all games and all practices.

19.2. All offensive (batters/runners) players shall wear an approved helmet with facemask at all times when they are on the field.

19.3. The use of a mouth guard or fielder's mask for pitchers and infielders is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED**.

20. BALL SPECIFICATIONS

- 11" ASA APPROVED, YELLOW, .375 COMPRESSION TESTED.

21. OBSTRUCTION

21.1. Defensive players cannot intentionally block any baseline, base, or home plate unless she is in possession of the ball. Defensive players must get out of the way of the runner unless they are fielding a hit ball or they are 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 the throw to be made). If the defensive player is actually receiving a throw at a base / plate, the

runner must slide or otherwise 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. Some collisions may be unavoidable. Use good judgment and make every effort to avoid collisions. A runner that is perceived by the umpire to have intentionally “run over” another player shall be called out and can be ejected from the game at the umpire’s discretion.

22. INTERFERENCE

22.1. Base runners must avoid contact with any hit ball and the defensive players attempting to field that ball. 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 the act of actually receiving a throw. They may not run out of the baseline to avoid a tag.

22.2. Batters must get out of the way of the catcher if any play is being made at home. If the batter interferes with the catcher’s ability to field a hit ball, receive a throw, or otherwise make the play at home, the batter may be called out and/or the runner advancing to home may be returned to 3rd base (both at the discretion of the umpire, based on perceived intent and recidivism).

23. STANDINGS AND PLAYOFFS

23.1 For spring only, game scores will be reported, and standings will be maintained.

23.2 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 Ponytail Commissioner.

23.2 Standings are automatically maintained by the SIPlay system and are available on the app, team website and AGSA website.

24.3 Standings will be determined by the SIPlay system which is the official system used for displaying the standings.

24.4 The exact playoff format shall be determined by the Ponytail Commissioner and will depend on number of teams and field availability. Tournament seeding will be based on regular season standings.

25. RULEMAKING

The Ponytail 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.

The effective date of the above rules is September 1, 2021.