

SFX YOUTH SPORTS ROOKIE SOFTBALL DIVISION RULES

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER YOUTH SPORTS ROOKIE SOFTBALL DIVISION RULES OF PLAY

(Effective April 2011)

Goals:

1. The games in the **Rookie Division of SFX Youth Sports** are played for both instruction and fun. All emphasis is toward developing teamwork, toward playing to best and toward developing and demonstrating the principles of good sportsmanship.
2. **No player who will be 9 years of age or older as of May 1st of the current year will be permitted to play Rookies Softball**

Unbalanced Teams – Teams might be split up weekly in order to fairly balance the games. This decision will be made by the Commissioner.

Umpires & Coaches; Game Time Review of Rules; Lineup Exchange; Late or No Umpire:

3. These rules of play are intended to guide the teams, to teach the players the fundamentals of the game and avoid disputes. Any and all questions regarding the rules shall be resolved by the umpire(s). A paid umpire provided by the league must confer jointly AT HOME PLATE with both managers prior to each game to review the rules. Batting lineups, including all players' name and numbers must be exchanged at this time. During the game, the decisions concerning play will not be left to any of the managers or coaches. In the event the paid umpire is late or is absent; the opposing managers will together agree and designate the game's umpire(s).

The Umpire and Challenging Calls:

The role of the umpire is to officiate the running of the game. **The rules of the game cannot be abridged or changed by the managers before or during the game. The umpire is the final and only arbiter of making umpiring calls. The coaches cannot question the umpire's judgment call.** The only aspect they can question is the interpretation of the rule. If a coach disagrees with the interpretation of the rule he or she may file a complaint with the SFX steering committee.

If a coach continues to argue a call or interpretation after discussing it with the umpire, whether it is on or off the field, the umpire is empowered to:

- A) Throw the coach out of the game;
- B) Suspend the game until the coach complies with the ejection;
- C) Declare a forfeit by the ejected coaches' team if the ejected coach does not comply with the ejection within three minutes of the umpire's decision; and
- D) Request that the coach be suspended from future games.

Coaches' Role:

The coaches' role is to teach, manage, and insure the administration of their team.

Coaches are expected to keep their parents and fans under control. If a parent/fan disrupts or prohibits play of the game the umpire may stop the game until the individual(s) stops or suspend the game due to the behavior of the individual(s).

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An Official Game; Last Inning; Rain or other Delays

4. Game will be official and complete after six innings or after one hour and thirty minutes (110 minutes) of playing time, whichever comes first. No inning will begin during the last 15 minutes of a game, but once begun, every attempt will be made to provide time to complete the last inning. The umpire will announce the beginning of the Last Inning to both managers at 15 minutes before the scheduled end of playing time

If Last Inning is called during the visiting team's half of the inning the unlimited run rule applies for the whole inning. If Last Inning is called after the visiting team's half of the inning and the visiting team was subject to the four (4) run limit then the home team is also subject to the (4) run limit even if this results in a tie or loss for the home team.

In the event of rain or other delay, **four complete innings or one hour of playing time will constitute a complete game (3½ innings if the home team is ahead)**. In the event that the final inning is incomplete after the allotted time has run out, the umpire will either: a) extend the playing time up to 15 minutes, if possible or b) return the score to that of the last completed inning. If rain or wet fields cause the start of any game to be delayed by more than 1/2 hour, that game will be automatically canceled.

If a game start is delayed because the prior game ended late, the following game's playing time will be extended for a time equal to the delay up to 15 additional minutes. The Last Inning rule will apply to the new playing time.

For example: *The prior game ends at 11:20am - the following game's playing time will end at 1:05pm with Last Inning called at 12:50pm.*

RAINOUTS

5. Every attempt must be made to play games as scheduled. It is difficult to predict spring weather even an hour in advance. When there is doubt, teams should meet. In other words, coaches should call their players only to cancel a game, not to tell them it will be played. Only the SFX or the umpire may cancel games.

SFX will announce all rain cancellations or rain delayed starts on the SFX HOTLINE (888) SFX-1047, (739-1047)

Rosters; Lineup Cards; Bench Coach; 4 Coaches; Warm-up Between Innings; Home Team Supplies Bases; Away Team Supplies Courtesy 1st Base; Dugout:

6. Prior to each game, each team manager/coach must submit a lineup card to the opposing manager/coach containing the first and last name and jersey number of each player then present in order of how they will bat. No more than four adults (including managers and coaches) are permitted on the field or on the bench at any time during the game. To conserve playing time, fielding practice in the infield and outfield between innings is limited to the time it takes the pitcher to throw **seven warm-up pitches**.

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Each team must supply a game ball. The home team shall supply bases, home plate and a pitching rubber. The visiting team shall supply a courtesy 1st base which shall have the same dimensions as the bases supplied by the Home Team. The courtesy 1st base shall be placed alongside and touching the right side of 1st base, and shall rest on the foul side of the foul line. **The courtesy 1st base must be used by the batter-runner** when a play is being made on them at 1st base. **The fielder must use the fair territory base** for a play on a batter-runner.

If a batter-runner fails to use the foul-side base and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with a play at 1st base, **the batter-runner shall be declared out.** **If a fielder attempts to make a play on the batter-runner and uses the foul-side base, the runner shall be declared safe.** After the batter-runner becomes a runner, the base in fair territory shall be used exclusively by that runner (for tagging up, etc.).

Official Ball: 10 inch RIF level 10, optic yellow, leather cover

Base and Pitching Rubber Distances:

7. Bases will be **FORTY FIVE feet (45')** apart. The Pitching Rubber will be **Twenty Five feet (25')** from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber (the side closest to home plate).

BATS

8. **Bats are restricted to softball models.** Wood or metal is acceptable.

UNIFORMS

9. All players must be in full uniform in order to be allowed to play, which must include a team visor and shirt (which bears a number that is unique to that player on that team). Only softball pants are permitted. Cleats or spikes cannot be worn. Only rubber soled athletic shoes or sneakers may be worn. **No watches or removable jewelry may be worn.** Jewelry permanently affixed to the body can be worn provided, in the judgment of the umpire, that it is completely covered by a bandage / band-aid.

Batting Helmet:

10. All players must wear a batting helmet **while at bat and** a batting helmet **while on base.** Replacement of helmet in the field requires a time out called by the umpire.

Catcher's Equipment:

11. The catcher must wear a helmet, mask, chest protector, shin guards while playing the field.

Minimum Team; Forfeits; Late Players

12. **A team failing to field at least 8 players 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time, as determined by the umpire according to the provisions of these rules, shall forfeit the game. A game MUST then be played** dividing all available players.

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The purpose of this rule is two-fold: a) The players who come should have the opportunity to play; b) The players who do not come must realize that there is a consequence for failing to support their team mates and for failing to arrive at scheduled games on time. A player who arrives after the line-ups have been exchanged and the umpire calls "play ball" will take place in the batting order **after the last player listed**. **If a team, for any reason, cannot field at least 8 players during the course of the game**, that team shall forfeit the game and play shall continue for the balance of the time period by dividing all the available players. In the event a game is continued (whether on another day or much later in the same day), a player who did not come to the first part of the game is eligible to play in the continued part of the game and **shall be placed at the end of the batting order**.

Playing Time; Defensive Positions; Free Substitution

13. Every member of each team must play a defensive position in the field **for at least two innings, or six outs during the first three innings** (players on teams with more than 15 players in attendance need only play one inning or three outs during the first two innings). Except for reason of discipline or injury, no player should sit on the bench for more than one inning in a row.

Ten (10) defensive positions are fielded; the nine standard softball positions are filled along with one extra outfielder, who is positioned at the discretion of the team manager. **All outfielders must take their position on the outfield at least ten (10) feet from the infield baseline, and may not move into the infield until the ball is put into play.** Free substitutions and or shifting of defensive players are permitted at any time.

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Pitching Rules; Hit Batters

Pitching:

14. Pitching will be coach pitch. A batter hit by a pitch cannot advance to first base. A batted ball, which hits or is touched by a pitcher, is a foul ball. Pitchers must avoid the ball.

15. Defensive Pitcher – ONE (1) defensive pitcher position is to teach the importance of a pitcher as a fielder. This position is not a free roaming infielder.

The defensive pitcher must play:

- 1) Close to the mound -- **no closer to home plate than the pitching rubber.**
- 2) On either side -- **within 3 feet of the pitcher**
- 3) **NOT** in the space behind the pitcher (**SEE Defensive Set-Up Chart on Page 4**)

If the defensive pitcher does not respect these boundaries and makes a play that results in a base runner being tagged or thrown out, the runner will be called safe and allowed to advance to the base being taken. This rule is in force to allow well hit balls to be put into play.

Universal Batting / Batting Out of Order

16. All players at a game must be in the batting order at all times. All players must bat in order. If a player bats out of order, rule 6.07 of the Official Rules shall apply. *A batter who is unable to bat because of injury will be removed from the game and batter order will continue with the next listed batter. A batter who is unwilling (for whatever reason) to bat will be called out. The umpire alone will determine which batters are "Unwilling" and which are "Unable." The manager or bench coach must notify both the umpire and opposing team's manager when player leaves a game before it is officially concluded.*

Balls & Strikes; Bunts are Not Allowed; No Dropped 3rd Strike; No Stealing

17. There is a limit of 10 pitches to a batter. No balls and strikes are called. A batter will be called out if they do not get a hit. The official ruling is a strike out. There are no walks given. Three swinging strikes will result in a strike out. Foul balls count as strikes, **but a foul on the third strike will not result in a strike out unless the ball has been bunted. A Bunted Foul ball after two strikes is considered a strike and will result in a STRIKE OUT.**

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Foul tips do not count as a third strike or as an out if caught by the catcher. The third strike DOES NOT need to be caught by the catcher. Any foul ball which is hit in the air **5 FEET or higher and caught, is an out. The umpire will make this determination.**

Stealing:

18. Base runners are not allowed to steal. Leading is not allowed. Improper leads or stealing will result in a warning by the umpire to the player, the runner's team and to the team manager and the runner must return to the proper base. After the warning, infractions by players on that team will result in the offending runner being called out even if a play is not made.

Dead Ball; Advancing Bases; Out of Bounds & Ground Rules

19. End of play is when the ball has been fielded and a throw or play has been made. For example:

- **Batted balls hit to the outfield:** Play is over and the ball is dead once a ball thrown towards the infield.
- **Batted balls that remain in the infield:** Play is over and the ball is dead when an infielder fields the ball and throws to any base or attempts to tag a runner.
- Under this section, once the ball is dead, **Base runners may only advance to the base they have started towards when the play ended, at the risk of being put out.**
- The base runner may return to the prior base without the risk of being put out. No new bases may be taken.

No Infield Fly Rule; Catcher's Obstruction; Slide Feet First Only

20. The infield fly rule will not be used. *A batter is never automatically out on a pop fly to the infield and runners should attempt to avoid force plays by advancing if the fly ball is not caught.*

In addition, "The catcher, without the ball in his or her possession has no right to block the pathway of a runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he or she is fielding a ball or ... already has the ball in his or her hands."

4-Run Mercy Rule, Last Inning Exception, Tie Breaker

21. Except in the last inning of play, if team at bat scores 4 runs in a single inning, its offensive half of the inning will end, regardless of the score. **In the last inning there shall be no limit to the runs scored by either team unless the visiting team is ahead by 15 or more runs, then that team will be limited to 4 runs for the last inning.**

Then, in the bottom of the inning, the home team will be limited to the number of runs needed to **tie the game**. If the home team ties the score, the game ends in a tie, in this situation, **the home team cannot WIN the game.**

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22. (a) Each team is responsible for keeping count of the put outs for each side. In the event of a tie, **the team with the most put outs will be declared the winner**. If each team has the same number of put-outs against each other, the game will be declared a tie.

Post Game Handshake:

23. All players and coaches on each team must line up at home plate after each game to exchange handshakes (in Stanley Cup-style). **Any disrespectful or disruptive behavior by any player or coach during the post game handshake may result in at least a one-game suspension.**

Coaches Conduct

24. No adult is permitted in fair territory except while the umpire has called a time out. Three adult coaches are permitted on the field (in foul territory) during a teams offensive half of an inning (in the first base coaches box, the third base coaching box, and one other site) One adult coach is permitted on the field in (foul territory) during his team's defensive half of the inning, *provided that this coach is not interfering with the line of sight of the offensive coaches.*

All teams should have a bench coach to keep the line-up in order, to keep score, and to have players ready to bat. Coaches are expected to have the line-up handy in order that games may be played expeditiously. **Excessive coaching is not allowed during the game.** While players may be reminded of proper technique, **this should not cause the game to be delayed. No coach is permitted to touch any player on the field or the ball if it is in play.** This may result in an out being called by the umpire.

No Food, Smoking, in the Dugout or on the Field, etc.

25. No food is permitted in the dugout area or the playing field at any time during the game. No smoking or alcoholic beverages are allowed on the playing field or in the dugouts, whether by coaches, managers, umpires or any others associated with the game, while it is underway.

Throwing the Bat or Equipment

26. Throwing the bat or other equipment is not permitted. When a player intentionally throws a bat or piece of equipment, **at the discretion of the umpire, that player may be ejected from the game,**

When a batter unintentionally throws the bat, that batter and that team shall be warned. **Any batter on that team who thereafter unintentionally throws the bat shall be called out.**

When a player unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, the team shall receive a warning. Thereafter, if any player from the same team whom unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, that team shall be assessed an out in its next at bat.

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No Heckling Rule

27. At the request of either manager or the umpire on his own, the umpire shall instruct that heckling or destructive comments (trash talk) made by any player, coach, spectator, or other participant shall cease. The umpire is empowered to:

- 1. First**, warn the offending individual and his team.
- 2. Second**, eject the offending individual.
- 3. Third**, end the game, if necessary, granting a win to the non-offending team.

The purpose of this rule is to encourage players, coaches, & spectators to root for their team, NOT AGAINST the other team.

Code of Conduct Violations

28. Any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant who (1) engages in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant; or (2) initiates a fight or scuffle with any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant during, at, immediately following, or otherwise in connection with a SFX game or event shall be subject to being banned from any future SFX game or event including coaching for or playing on any team participating in SFX games or events.

Such banning, in the sole discretion of the SFX Board, may be temporary or permanent and subject to such other and additional conditions as may imposed by the SFX Board, including but not limited to, family members of the offending person being banned from SFX games and events.

The President or Commissioner of the SFX Board, or any individual or group of individuals duly appointed by the President or Commissioner may temporarily ban any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant accused of engaging in the above prohibited conduct from all SFX games and events including coaching for or playing on any team participating in SFX games or events. Such ban shall remain in effect until the next monthly or special meeting of the St. Francis Xavier Board.