

## Introduction

A League of Our Own was put together to provide an athletic forum for exposing Halton Hills residents to a wider circle of their peers, while competing in a more competitive sporting environment.

While an emphasis is placed on healthy competition in a recreational atmosphere which is open to both genders there is also the underlying purpose of expanding each participant's circle of influence and relationships within the community. To that end the league does not accept team registration, but rather is designed to expose players to old friends and new, while maintaining competitive balance and changing rosters for season to season.

The League is organized, conducted and administered by a volunteer staff with expertise in Softball & Baseball, on which our Fastpitch variation is based. These volunteers make up an Executive Council which will govern the implementation and execution of our league strategy.

The key distinction between the league as it is being run and other leagues currently available is in the rules format which exists, the absence of team registration, and the openly competitive nature of the games; most notably the changes from the slow-pitch variation of softball to a fastpitch variation.

# A League of Our Own Rules

**1.0 Playing Rules:** On field play is governed by the World Baseball Softball Confederation rules except for the local rules & deviations identified in this document.

WBSC Fast Pitch playing rules can be found at [www.wbssc.org](http://www.wbssc.org)

## Local Rules, Deviations & Highlights

**1.1 Regulation Game:** A regulation game consists of nine (9) completed innings, except as follows,

- (a) A full nine (9) innings need not be played if the home team is ahead at any time after the top of the 9<sup>th</sup> inning.
- (b) There shall be no new inning after 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- (c) Game ends and play is dead after 2 hours.
- (d) A batting coach may concede at any time their batting half inning during any inning at their discretion
- (e) A mercy will be under force when a leading team is up to bat and winning by 20 or more runs; a mercy rule of a maximum of 5 runs shall apply only while there is a 20 or more run advantage
- (f) The scorekeeper iPad will be considered the official timepiece and cannot be

contested.

- (g) The umpire shall notify both teams prior to the commencement of the last inning.
- (h) In the event of a tie (if time permits) any additional innings will be played in accordance with the international tiebreaker rule.
  - (1) Starting with the top of the 10th inning and for each half-inning thereafter the offensive team starts its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat last in that respective half-inning placed on second base as a runner.
- (i) In the event of a tie at the end of regulation time, the tie will stand.
- (j) In the event of a game being called, 4 innings shall be considered a complete game and the score at the end of the last completed inning shall stand.
- (k) In the event of a visiting team taking the lead in the top of the inning in dead ball time, then the result of the game reverts to the score at the beginning of the previous inning.
- (l) All games shall start on time. In the event a team cannot field 7 players at the scheduled time they have a 15 minute Grace period before they forfeit the game.
- (m) In the event of a forfeited game, the score shall be recorded as 7-0 in favour of the non-defaulting team.
- (n) After the start of the game, the pitcher may throw 8 warmup pitches in the first inning where the pitcher starts. Only 3 pitches in any other inning. No throwing around the infield after the 1st inning.

**1.2 Suspended or cancelled games:** There won't be make up games scheduled.

**1.3 Protests:** The plate umpire's decision(s) are final and not contestable.

- (a) **Regular Season:** In the event that a team feels that a rule or rules are not being applied properly, the team coach shall forward a request for clarification to the league executive. If found to be valid, the league will take appropriate measures to inform those involved or the membership as applicable within 7 days (or next game if practicable) .
- (b) **Playoffs:** If a protest arises during a playoff game, it will be arbitrated by a board executive prior to the resumption of the game.

**1.3 Player Eligibility:** All players (in order to participate) must be registered and their dues paid. Unless alleviation is granted by the Board.

- (a) **Substitutions:** Must be registered with the league. They need to be on a team or the substitution list. If they are not currently on another team they may only substitute onto any and all teams a maximum of 3 times.

1. Substitutions in the playoffs can only be made up to 9 players with approval of the opposing coach and league executive with someone of similar or lesser skill. The player targeted for replacement is the lowest ranked player who has played at least 10 games.

- (b) **Playoff Eligibility:** A player must play a minimum of 3 games for their team in order to be eligible unless an exemption has been granted by the Board.

**1.4 Ejections & Suspensions:** Any player ejected from a game must leave the immediate

area of the facility (out of sight of the game, away from the bleachers, dugouts, etc.,).

- (a) That player will receive a minimum one-game suspension from his/her team's next game. The player is not permitted to attend any games while on suspension.
- (b) If a coach is ejected from a game he/she will receive a minimum one-game suspension from his/her team's next game AND must meet with the Executive Committee before he/she can participate again.
- (c) It is the responsibility of team coaches to make sure that suspended players do not participate or attend any league/playoff games while on suspension.
- (d) If a suspended player participates in any game it will be counted as a forfeit loss.
- (e) If a coach refuses to give the name of a player on the request of an umpire, that player shall immediately be removed from the game. This information must be reported to the Executive Committee and the team coach will be suspended from his/her team's next game.
- (f) No participant shall knowingly endanger the safety of any player, official, or spectator.
- (g) Persons suspended more than once will be subject to a review with the Executive Committee, and may be permanently removed from the league, without grounds for reimbursement of fees.

**1.5 Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or bat-person shall at any time;

- (a) Incite or try to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators.
- (b) Use language that will in any manner refer to or reflect negatively upon opposing players, an umpire, team-mate, or any spectator.
- (c) Call "Time" or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the play is alive and in play for the purpose of trying to affect the outcome of the play.

**1.6 Probation:** A team or player may be placed on probation for a length of time to be determined by the Executive council.

- (a) A team or player on probation, who violated the participant's code of conduct may be suspended from the league.

**1.7 Rosters:** will be created by the league executive after the registration deadline has passed prior to the commencement of the season.

- (a) Adding a player mid-season can only be done by the executive committee, by majority decision. The coach making the request must submit the name and the player must pay a prorated registration fee.
- (b) There will be a 3 game probation period where suitability and team balance will be evaluated prior to that player being assigned to the team fulltime.

**1.8 Batting Order:** All players shall bat in a continuous order.

- (a) If an injured player is removed from the game their turn at bat will be skipped without penalty.

- (b) If a batter sustains an injury during his/her at bat, the previous out may take over the at-bat but the injured player may not return to the game thereafter.
- (c) If a player is ejected from the game, their at bat shall be considered an out.

**1.9 Defence:** a maximum of 9 players are allowed on the field at any given time.

- (a) Teams are allowed unlimited defensive substitutions.

**1.10 Casts, Braces & Jewellery:**

- (a) **Casts** (plastic or other hard substance in its final form) may not be worn during the game. Any exposed metal on a brace may be considered legal if covered by a soft material and taped.
- (b) Exposed **Jewellery** such as wrist watches, bracelets, large or loop type earrings and neck chains may not be worn during the game.
- (c) **Medical Alert** bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry, but if worn, they must be taped to the body.

**1.11 Batter-runner, Runner is Out:** If he/she remains on their feet and intentionally (with great force) runs into a Defensive player with the intent (in the umpires opinion) to injure said player or to dislodge the ball. And depending on the circumstances may be ejected from the game.

- 1) On approaching a base/plate, the batter-runner/runner must slide, go around or stop to avoid running into an opposing player.
- 2) On sliding into a base/plate if in the umpires opinion the base-runner was attempting to dislodge the ball or injure the defensive player they shall be called out.
  - a) **NOTE:(on a thrown ball) it is an illegal act (Obstruction rule 4.5) for a defensive player to be between a base-runner and a base/plate if they do not have the ball in their possession.**
    - i) **Any attempt by a defensive player (other than self defence) to stand up or knock down an opposing player will result in the base-runner being declared safe and the defensive player suspended.**
    - ii) **All attempts should be made to avoid full body contact**
  - b) **NOTE: if there is no play at a particular base it is the defensive player's obligation to move out of the way so that the base-runner may round the base unobstructed. Otherwise the umpire will call obstruction and the base-runner will be awarded an additional base-runner**
  - c) **NOTE: It is acknowledged that incidental contact can occur and as such if that is in the umpires opinion what has happened no one shall be penalized.**

**2.0 The Diamond**

**2.1 Bases:** 75 feet.

**2.2 Pitching rubber:** 46 feet

**2.3 Fitness & Suitability of the Diamond:** It is up to the discretion of the plate umpire if the diamond is in a suitable condition to allow play.

**2.4 Set up of the Diamond:** It is the responsibility of the home team to set up the equipment at the diamond prior to the start of the first game.

**2.5 Putting away equipment at the Diamond:** It is the responsibility of the fielding team at the end of their game to put away the equipment at the diamond at the end of the last game.

### **3.0 Equipment:**

**3.1 Ball:** 11" as supplied by the league

**3.2 Bat:** Bats banned by Softball Canada and/or Softball Ontario are not permitted. Use of a bat on the banned list will incur 1 game suspension.. **(this is a safety issue)**

**3.3 Trappers/Mitts:** May only be used by First Basemen and the Catcher. The penalty for use of an illegal glove is that any play made by the defender wearing the glove is nullified and the runner is deemed safe and any runner forced to advance may do so without risk of being put out.

**3.3 Spikes:** Metal spikes are not permitted.

### **4.0 Miscellaneous & Other Important Things**

**4.1 Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike:** On an uncaught third strike with (1) no runner on first base, or (2) with a runner on first base and two outs, the batter immediately becomes a runner. The strike is called, but the umpire does not call the batter out. The batter may then attempt to reach first base and must be tagged or forced out. An "uncaught" strike includes not only pitches dropped by the catcher, but also pitches that hit the ground before the catcher attempts to catch it

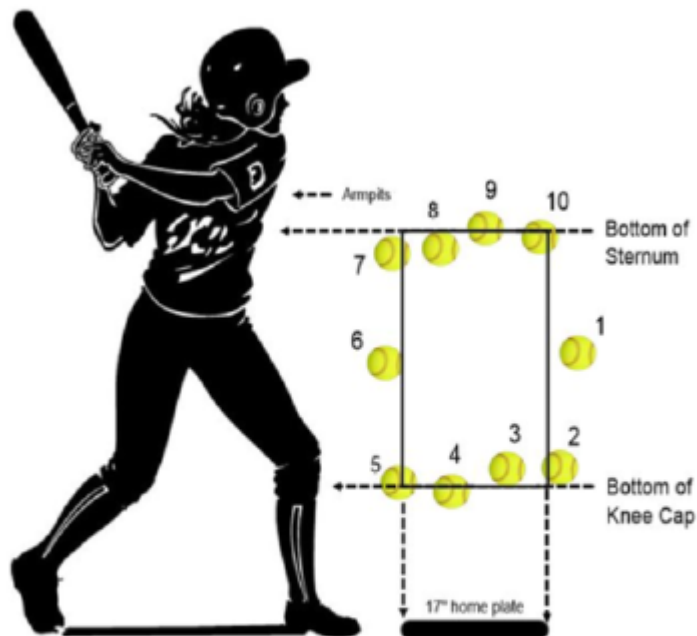
**4.2 Infield Fly:** A fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied before two are out. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder who positions themselves in the infield on the play will be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.

(a) On an infield fly the umpire shall identify it immediately by calling out "**Infield Fly, Batter is out, IF fair.**"

(b) Other base-runners may advance at their own discretion.

**4.3 Strike zone:** The space over any part of home plate between the batter's armpits and the bottom of the batter's knee cap, when they assume their natural batting stance. The natural batting stance is the stance the batter takes after the release of the pitch

when deciding to swing or not swing at the pitch.



Rulings: 1) ball, 2) strike, 3) strike, 4) ball, 5) ball, 6) strike, 7) strike, 8) strike, 9) ball, 10) ball

- 4.4 Interference:** On a batted ball, the first defensive player to play the ball has right of way over a base-runner/batter-runner. Also, Rule 8.10(c) states that the runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.

**Note:** Contact does not have to occur for interference to have occurred. Any action by a base-runner/batter-runner that negatively affects the defender's ability to field a batted ball is considered interference.

- 4.5 Obstruction:** On a thrown ball, a base-runner/batter-runner has the right of way over any defender attempting to catch a thrown ball.

**Note:** Contact does not always mean interference or obstruction occurred.

There is such a thing as incidental contact - 2 players both unsure of where to go and contact is made.

- 4.7 Over Running First Base:** The batter runner may turn in any direction after over running first base as long as he/she returns to the base immediately. If an attempt is made to go to second base, the runner can be tagged out. This is a judgment made by the umpire.
- 4.8 Strike:** A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat and tapped slowly. If no attempt is made to make contact with the ball outside the strike zone, it should be called a ball.
- 4.9 Bunting:** Permitted

**4.10 Slap Hit/Slap Bunt:** A slap hit/slap bunt is not a bunt. With 2 strikes, a slap hit/slap bunt going foul is not considered strike 3.

**4.11 Check swing:** If it is the plate umpire's judgement that the batter made an attempt to swing at appealed to the base umpire - use the guiding principle that the plate umpire does not call it a strike unless he/she saw the attempted swing - therefore no need for an appeal of what the plate umpire saw.

**4.12 Safety Bag** - On any live ball play made from first base foul territory, the batter runner and the defensive player may use either base.

- (a) When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory and if hit by a throw from the foul side of first base, it would not be interference.
- (b) If the fielder uses the orange base in this situation and the runner makes contact with the fielder it is interference on the runner. If both players use the white portion and the fielder causes the runner to hold up or change direction it is obstruction on the fielder.

**4.13 Thrown ball goes out of play:**

- (a) all runners, including the batter-runner shall be awarded two bases from the last base legally touched based on their position at the time that the thrown ball left the fielder's hand.
- (b) if there are two runners between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

**4.14 Fair ball bouncing out of play or off a defensive player.**

- (a) When a fair ball bounces out of play, including if it deflects off a defensive player, the umpire shall declare "Dead Ball" as soon as the ball goes out of play.
- (b) All runners shall be awarded two bases.
- (c) The award is based on their position at the time of the pitch - not at the time that the ball went out of play.
- (d) The award is the same regardless of where the ball actually goes out of play.

**4.15 Lead-off (Pitcher's Circle)**

- (a) The common misconception is that if the ball is thrown back to the pitcher and he/she has it in his/her position in the pitcher's circle before the batter-runner reaches first base that the batter-runner must stop at first base.
- (b) Even though the ball may be in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner may:
  - 1. continue past first base.
  - 2. is entitled to run toward second base, as long as he/she does not stop at first base.
  - 3. once the runner makes a stop, he/she must immediately proceed to the next base or return to his/her base UNLESS the pitcher makes a play (including a fake throw) on the runner or another runner.
- (c) **The RUNNER is OUT IF:** the runner stops and simply stands there off the base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and no play is made -

“DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD-OFF” If the runner stops and then makes a move in more than one direction immediately after the stop while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher’s circle and no play is made “DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD-OFF”

- (d) **Points of Emphasis:** The pitcher cannot force the first stop by a runner merely by having possession of the ball in the pitcher’s circle. Put another way - the runner is allowed one stop - as soon as he/she stops he/she must make a decision immediately to either advance or return.
- (e) A play on the runner (including a fake throw) nullifies any penalty - put another way, every fake throw allows the runner one more stop.

#### **4.16 Courtesy Runner:**

- (a) Allowed, and shall be the last out, or if no one has been declared out, the player furthest from coming to bat (and is not on base).
- (b) Courtesy runners are not permitted to steal bases nor advance on a passed ball.

#### **4.17 Playing equity Rules: During the regular season**

- (a) Outfielders may not set up any closer to the infield than (approximately) midway between the outfield fence and the infield skin.
- (b) Infielders may not set up closer to home plate closer than the pitching rubber.
- (c) If a male player batting in front of a female batter is walked intentionally, the female player at her own discretion may proceed to first base and her at-bat scored a walk.
- (d) A pitcher can declare an intentional walk to the umpire to save time, but a player can only be intentionally walked once per game. Further to this, the same rules apply to walking a player with 4 straight balls at the umpire’s discretion. In the case of a violation per above, the intentionally walked player would get an additional base per violation within the same game.
- (e) If a team has 11 players or fewer, no player shall sit more than twice in the game without approval.

#### **4.18 Optional base running on home run:**

- (a) While all players are encouraged to run all bases after hitting a home run, if a player wishes not to run the bases, it is not required for the runs to count.

### **5.0 PITCHING**

#### **5.1 Pitching (Men/Women):**

- (a) At the start of the pitch, one (1) foot is required to be on (touching) the rubber (Drive leg). The hips must be in line with first and third bases.
- (b) The other foot (stride leg) may be behind the rubber.



- (c) Prior to delivering a pitch there MUST be a pause (Entire Body Motionless) with both hands together in front of the body for a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 3 seconds.
- (d) The next motion constitutes the start of the pitch, (once the hands separate they may not come together again),
- (e) The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to the start of the pitch. Lifting the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate, creating a rocking motion is an illegal act.
- (f) At the start of the pitch the pivot foot may remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or Push Off AND Drag from the pitcher's plate, land and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter. The pivot foot may follow through with the pitcher's continuous action.
- (g) Leaping and crow hopping are not permitted.
- (h) The Pitcher MUST immediately deliver the ball to the batter and all movement from this point shall be forward. It is illegal to step behind the rubber AFTER the pause.  
**EXCEPTION:** IF the Pitcher wishes to call time he/she must step off to the rear of the rubber first, and call for "Time".
- (i) On the step forward, the pitcher may slide their pivot foot sideways or forward on the pitching plate as long as they do not lift the foot (they may clear their cleats slightly if necessary). They may also rotate on the ball/toes of their foot to push off. Loss of contact with the heel of the pivot foot is permissible during the rotation as long as the point of the pivot foot does not move forward. Ball must be released prior to loss of contact with the pitching plate.
- (j) In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
- (k) The delivery must be an underhand motion, with the hand below the hip, the wrist not further from the body than 6 inches with no stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- (l) The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- (m) All movement of the pitching arm must be continuous as the pitcher steps or pushes from the pitcher's plate.
- (n) The pitcher's push off to drag, must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate.
- (o) The pitcher's arm on the release of the ball may follow through, provided the wind-up does not continue.
- (p) After the release, the pitcher must not continue with a windup
- (q) The ball MUST be released below the waist.

## 5.2 Pitching:

- (a) Windmill pitching is prohibited.
- (b) Pitchers MUST deliver the pitch in an underhand motion.
- (c) Slingshot pitching is prohibited.
- (d) On the back-swing, the entire arm, elbow and ball must be below the shoulder.

#### **5.4 Illegal Pitcher:**

- a. A player who has been declared an Illegal Pitcher is not permitted to occupy the pitching position during the game. The Illegal Pitcher may occupy any other defensive position and continue on offense for the game.
- b. A pitcher can be declared an illegal pitcher in the following ways:
  - i. If the umpire has called a minimum of 2 illegal pitches according to the above rules, the umpire may declare the pitcher an Illegal Pitcher.
  - ii. Following a Protest as defined in section 1.3 whether due to the failure of an umpire to call the illegal pitches or other reasons, a player may be declared an Illegal Pitcher before a game.
- c. If a player has been declared an Illegal Pitcher twice in a season, the player will be declared an Illegal Pitcher for the remainder of the season.