

Division Rules: (Minors)

1. Rosters

- a. Requirements: All players must be registered with Aberdeen Matawan Softball and have consented to the current season's waivers. Rostered players must be enrolled in grades 3, 4 or 5. Any deviation to this division rule would be limited to include players in lower grades and divisions only and must be discussed and approved by the league president; and in cases of inter-league play, with the president(s) of participating leagues.
- b. Guest Players: Guest players will not be allowed, unless participation of said guest player comes in lieu of a team's forfeit on that given day.
- c. Guest Player Requirements and Restrictions: Guest players must be registered with the league and have consented to the current season's waivers. Guest players must be enrolled in grades 3, 4 or 5 and rostered on a Minors division team. Any deviation to this division rule would be limited to include players in lower grades and divisions only and must be discussed and approved by the league president; and in cases of inter-league play, with the president(s) of participating leagues. Guest players must bat last in the batting lineup and can play any position, but must rotate and cannot play more than 2 innings at any one position. Guest players may not pitch or play in playoff games.

2. Equipment

- a. Balls: Fastpitch softballs with the following specifications: circumference: 11 +/- 1/8"; compression: maximum of 375#; COR: maximum of 46.25 +/- 0.75
- b. Bats: Fastpitch softball bats of composite or aluminum build. Must contain one of the following certification stamps: "USA Softball Certified," "ASA 2004 certified," "NSA Certified," "USA Softball Certified" or "USSSA Fastpitch 1.20."
- c. Batting Helmets: NOCSAE approved batting helmets with extended ear flaps, which cover both ears and temples are mandatory for all batters, on deck batters, base runners, non-adult base coaches and non-adult bat & ball shaggers in live ball territory, even if the ball is dead. All fastpitch batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE-approved face protector.
- d. Catcher's Gear: During live play, the catcher shall wear a NOCSAE approved head protector (with dual earflaps), an approved mask with throat protector, a body chest protector and shin guards. If a hockey style NOCSAE approved catcher's helmet is used, a separate throat protector is not needed.
- e. Fielder's Masks: The use of defensive face masks is mandatory and must meet the transparency requirements applicable to batting and catching helmets. If an eye shield is attached, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 per cent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

- f. Cleats: Metal cleats and metal toe plates are prohibited.

3. Field

- a. Pitching Distance: 35 feet from the back of home plate to the middle of the pitching rubber.
- b. Base Path Distance: 60 feet measured from the back of home plate to back end of base.

4. Pre-Game

- a. Pre-Game Conference: Umpires and coaches will discuss game rules, including dead ball territories, prior to the start of the game at a pre-game conference at home plate.
- b. Lineup Cards: Lineup cards will be exchanged at the pre-game conference.
- c. Game Balls: Each team will provide the umpire with one game ball.
- d. Start Time: Umpire will establish game start time when the visiting team's first batter steps into the batter's box.

5. Game Rules

- a. Umpires: One sanctioned umpire or two volunteer umpires. Umpires will have full authority over the game.
- b. Time limit: No new inning can start beyond the 1:20 (80 minute) mark after the game start time. Last inning must be called before the top of the inning.
- c. Infield Fly Rule: Not enforced.
- d. Bunting: Bunting is allowed during player pitch, but not during coach pitch. No slashing/fake bunting.
- e. Dropped Third Strike: Batters will not advance on a dropped third strike.
- f. Pitching Limits: Individual pitchers may pitch up to a maximum of 3.0 innings per game. A pitcher may be relieved, then re-enter to pitch in the same game, provided they have not already exceeded a maximum of 3.0 innings maximum. Once the pitcher reaches 3.0 innings, they must be relieved. *(Example: Pitcher A can pitch 1, 1/3 innings and be relieved, then re-enter as a pitcher later in the game to pitch an additional 1, 2/3 innings.)*

- g. Base on Balls/Walks: Walks will not be issued. After the fourth ball is called, a coach will take over for the pitcher and the pitcher will field the position to the side of the coach. Coaches will only throw three pitches to the batter.
 - i. Batters will only be allowed three strikes per at bat, either from the pitcher, the coach pitcher, or a combination of both. Coach pitch strikes will only occur on swings and misses. Umpires will not call looking strikes during coach pitch. (Example: A pitcher throws two strikes and four balls to a batter, the coach pitcher takes over and the batter swings and misses the first pitch. In this example, the batter is out).
 - ii. If the batter fouls off the third pitch, they are granted a fourth and so on, until the outcome of the at bat is determined by a swing and miss, or a batted ball in fair territory.
- h. Hit Batters: A pitcher will be removed from a game if they hit 3 batters in any one inning or 5 batters in their allotted innings. To qualify as a hit batter, the batter must make an attempt to avoid being hit by a pitched ball. If the batter leans out of the batter's box into a pitch, or if a pitched ball rolls or bounces and hits the batter, the batter will not take first base and it does not count as a "hit batter" when considering removal of a pitcher.
- i. Batting Lineups: Each team must have a minimum of 8 offensive players to start the game. If a batter is injured and cannot bat or must leave the game, the departing player will be skipped in the batting lineup and the offensive team will not be penalized with an out. Any player who arrives to the game after game start will be written in as the last batter in the lineup. Guest players will be listed as the last batter.
- j. Defensive Set-up: Minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 defensive players, including 6 infielders and 4 outfielders on the field during live play. If teams field less than nine players, they may borrow defensive players from the opposing team in order to have 9 fielders. Outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass, until the ball is released by the pitcher. Infielders must play normal infield positions, i.e. short center-fielders and shifts are not allowed.
- k. Pinch Runners: In an effort to speed up play, catchers must be replaced with a pinch runner when they are on base with two outs. Pitchers can be replaced with a pinch runner with two outs, but it is not mandatory. Pinch runners are allowed for any player with an injury. Pinch runners must be last batted out, unless they are the current catcher or pitcher.
- l. Leads: A player may take a lead upon the pitcher's release of the ball. Umpires may require runners to go back to a base, if in their judgment, the runner left early on a steal. A runner can also be called out, if in the umpire's opinion, a runner left early on a batted ball.
- m. Base Stealing: Base stealing (including delayed steals) is permitted at third base only and is not permitted during coach pitch.

- n. Advances on Overthrows: A runner can advance one base on an overthrow in an attempt by an infielder (including pitchers) or outfielder to throw the runner out at any base during live play. Runners may not advance on overthrows by the catcher in their attempt to throw out a base runner attempting to steal a base. Base runners may not advance on a catcher's overthrow to a pitcher after a pitched ball. Live play continues until the pitcher has secured the ball in the circle.
- o. Dead Balls: When the ball is thrown out of play, the runner will be awarded one base beyond the base that they were headed to at the time the ball was deemed a dead ball. Plays are deemed over when the ball is thrown or batted beyond the field of play or is thrown back to a player within the pitching circle (or vicinity of the pitcher's mound, if there is no circle).
- p. Look back rule: When a batter gets a hit, play is live until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the eight foot radius around the pitcher's mound. Once possession is made, all runners may only stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or advance to the next base. If they hesitate and make a second attempt to advance, they are out. If the pitcher makes any physical attempt to disrupt or throw out the runner, the runner may advance at her free will.
- q. Run Limits: Offensive half-innings end when there are 3 outs or 5 runs scored. The 5-run cap is lifted in the last inning, once the last inning has been determined by umpires and both coaches.
- r. Mercy Rules: Games will be deemed over if the home team is leading by more than 12 runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings.
- s. Coaches: No coaches will be permitted on the field during live game play, except to back a catcher up to speed up play. The coach backing up the catcher must not assist in any passed balls or live plays.
- t. Timeouts: Coaches may only call 2 timeouts per offensive or defensive inning consisting of 1 to 2 minutes. Injury or equipment timeouts do not count towards this rule.
- u. Mound Visits: A coach may visit the pitcher once per inning. If a 2nd visit occurs in a defensive inning, the pitcher must be removed from the inning.