

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

A. GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. It is the philosophy of the West Bend Park, Recreation and Forestry Department (Department) that the youth softball program is for skill development, fun, socialization & character development
2. The philosophy of this program also suggests strongly that each coach should avoid “running up the score” at all costs. Line-ups should be adjusted accordingly in an effort to avoid this (pull your best defensive players, try new positions, etc...)
3. All coaches will be required to adhere to a “coach’s promise” that promises to “keep kids first”. Failure to adhere to the stated or implied philosophies of the program can result in the coach’s removal from the program.
4. It is the Department’s intent to have all teams organized with a head coach, assistant coaches and players at least two weeks prior to the first scheduled game.
5. It is strongly suggested that each team have a minimum of three scheduled practices prior to the first game.
6. Games will only be re-scheduled due to weather or Department reasons. Teams will not be allowed to reschedule games based on any other criteria.
7. Scheduling requests can be made to the Department in advance. All requests will be considered.

B. TEAM/ROSTER:

1. This program is open to City of West Bend residents and any and all non-residents.
2. Teams will be formed by school. Teams without enough players will be combined with another team.
3. Player’s grade will be based on their current year in school, not their next year in school.
4. It is recommended that a team roster not exceed 16 players nor be lower than 12 players.
5. Players may only play on one team.
6. Teams may not pick up or use a player that is not on their official league roster.
7. Teams with fewer than eight players shall forfeit the game. Teams are encouraged to scrimmage in this situation with the use of an umpire. Teams must a minimum of 8 players at all times to have an official game.

C. EQUIPMENT:

1. Players must wear a team shirt.
2. Tennis shoes or shoes with molded rubber cleats are allowed. Metal cleats and/or sandals are not allowed.
3. An 11” softball will be used.
4. All bats must be official ASA sanctioned softball bats. Hard ball bats are not allowed.

D. LENGTH OF GAME:

1. Games shall consist of 7 full innings unless called because of weather, time limit, or run rule limit.
2. No new inning shall start after 50 minutes from the beginning of the game. The scoreboard timer will be the official game time
3. A game is official after 35 minutes or 4 complete innings.
4. **Grace Period** - The umpire will allow a 10 minute grace period before declaring a forfeit. Game time will start when the 10 minute grace period starts.
5. **Tie** - In an event of a tie, extra innings may be played as long as 50 minutes has not elapsed. After 50, even in a tie, no new inning may begin. The game will be declared a tie if no team is ahead after 50 minutes.
6. **12 run limit rule:**
 - a. The 12 run rule applies (12 runs ahead of other team); 4½ innings if the home team is winning, 5 innings if the home team is losing. *This rule applies to all leagues as there has been much confusion and discussion on allowing teams to continue to play.*
 - b. “Blowing out” teams without (in the opinion of the Department staff) using all available resources to prevent a blowout may be subject to penalty or suspension.

E. PLAYING AREA:

1. **Pitching Mound Distance:**

- a. Cadet League - 40'
 - b. Junior League - 46' utilizing a 25" x 17" strike zone mat
2. The home team shall occupy the benches on the third base line and maintain the official scoreboard. The visiting team shall occupy the benches on the first base line and maintain the scoreboard.
 3. All coaches are restricted to the bench area/dugout until a time-out is granted by the umpire.
 4. Only 1 person is allowed in each of the coach's boxes located at 1st and 3rd base.
 5. Only the "on deck" batter is allowed to be past the restraining line. The restraining line is the door opening of the dugout. For safety reasons NO practice swings will be allowed during the game anywhere except in the batter's box prior to a player's at bat.
 6. Team pre-game warm-ups must take place in the outfield from right or left to center. Teams are not allowed to practice on the diamond prior to the game. Teams should refrain from using the mound prior to game and should stay off the infield until the game is to begin.

F. FIELDING:

1. All players must play a minimum of two innings in the field unless the game is shortened to less than 5 innings. Players may switch defensive positions at any time provided the batting order does not change.
2. A maximum of 10 players may play the field with the 10th player restricted to play the outfield.
3. Outfielders must play at the edge of the grass until the ball is hit.
4. Free substitution is permitted in the field.
5. **Cadet Only** - One defensive coach is allowed in the field on the grass area.

G. PITCHING:

1. **Pitching Mound Distance:**

- a. Cadet League - 40'
 - b. Junior League - 46' utilizing a 25" x 17" Strike Zone Mat
2. **Pitching:**
- a. Cadet - Each coach or designee will pitch to his/her own team. Each batter will be given up to 5 pitches to hit the ball before he/she is out. There will be no called balls or strikes. The pitcher's mound will be 40 feet from home plate. Minimize arc and an emphasis on a flat pitch is encouraged. Coach or designee shall not move from pitcher's mound once ball is hit. If a batted ball hits the designated pitcher it is a dead ball which will be counted as one of the 5 pitches.
 - b. Junior - Pitchers will pitch from a distance of 46 feet. Umpires and coaches should insure that pitchers keep within this range to maximize the safety of the pitcher. Minimize arc and an emphasis on a flat pitch is encouraged. Umpires will call balls and strikes based on a strike zone.
3. A pitch that is too high or too low (umpire judgment) is an illegal pitch and shall be called a ball. Should the batter choose to strike at an illegally pitched ball, whatever play that follows is legal
 4. Speed and height are left entirely to the judgment of the umpire.
 5. The pitcher shall take a position with one or both feet on the ground and in contact with the pitcher's plate.
 6. It only requires one foot on the mound, but from this position, the pitcher's arms must come to rest holding the ball in front of his body. The pitcher must maintain this position for two and not more than twenty seconds before starting the delivery.
 7. No more than five (5) warm-up pitches will be allowed at any time.

H. BATTING ORDER:

1. Cadet League - All players present at the start of the game will be placed in the batting order. NOTE: This number may vary between teams, as one team may have 11 players present, thus 11 players in the batting order, while their opponents may have 14 players present, thus 14 players in the batting order. A late arriving player can be added to the batting order provided they are placed at the end of the batting order.
2. Junior League - Coaches may set their batting order as they see fit, however it is encouraged to place every player present in the batting order. NOTE: This number must remain the same for the entire game, thus if a coach has 12 players in the batting order, it must remain 12.

3. Should a player get hurt and not be able to play during the game, a pinch runner will be allowed. That pinch runner must be the last player who made an out. The injured player may return to the batting order without penalty. Should the injured player not be able to return, their position in the batting order will simply be skipped at no penalty.
4. The batting order should be exchanged by coaches before the game.

I. BATTING:

1. **Innings:**
 - a. Cadet League - An inning shall consist of 3 outs or when 8 runs are scored.
 - b. Junior League - An inning shall consist of 3 outs or when 10 runs are scored.
2. **Batted balls** - In the event of a foul ball, base runners must return to their base, unless the foul is caught in which case the runners are allowed to tag up, but they do so at their own risk of being thrown out.
3. Bunting is not allowed (umpire's judgment). Penalty is an automatic out/ dead ball.
4. **Infield fly rule** - A fair batted ball (not a line drive) which can be caught in flight by an infielder with ordinary effort. Any defensive player may catch the ball in the infield area. The batter is out if he hits an infield fly with runners on 1st and 2nd base, or on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base with less than 2 outs. There is no infield fly rule for Cadet or Junior Leagues
5. **Outs & Strikes:**
 - a. Cadet – There are no balls or strikes. A batter is NOT out if the ball is hit foul unless caught by a defensive player or on the 5th pitch.
 - b. Junior - 3 balls and 2 strikes. A batter is OUT if the 2nd ball hit is a foul.
6. **Intentional walk** - If a pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, the team manager should notify the plate umpire, who shall award the batter first base. Because of the Department philosophy, intentional walks are discouraged and should be minimal and should be accompanied by a thorough explanation to the opposing coach explaining the logic behind the decision.
7. **Strike Zone:**
 - a. Cadet League - Each batter will be given up to 5 pitches to hit the ball before he/she is out. There will be no called balls or strikes
 - b. Junior League - 25" x 17" Strike Zone Mat
8. **Thrown bat rule** - Throwing the bat is dangerous and cannot be permitted (umpire's judgment—defined as bat leaving the player's hands out of control). On the first occurrence a warning will be given. If the same player throws the bat again, the player will be called out. If the same player throws the bat again, the player will be removed from the batting order will simply be skipped and will NOT be recorded as an out from the game.

J. BASE RUNNERS:

1. There will be no unnecessary roughness such as intentional contact of another player. Proper sliding should be taught and encouraged. Infraction of this rule may result in an ejection from the game and possible suspension.
2. **Leading Off:**
 - a. Cadet - No leading, however an anticipation step is allowed.
 - b. Junior - No leading off or anticipation steps
3. A base runner may leave his base when a pitched ball has reached or passed home plate, but must return at the risk of being tagged out immediately after the pitch sequence is complete.
4. A base runner who legally over runs 1st base, and ATTEMPTS to run toward 2nd base and is legally tagged while off base, is out. Coaches should emphasize this rule to their players.
5. A base runner that is struck with a fair-batted ball while off base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, is out.
6. On any batted ball leaving the infield, the base runners may, at the risk of being thrown out, advance as many bases as possible until the ball is returned to the infield. However, once the ball is returned to the infield and stopped (not necessarily controlled, umpires judgment) (and the ball must be in the infield), the base runners may continue to advance only to the next base. This means that a base runner that has not yet reached second, third or home base may advance to that base only, under the risk of being thrown out. The base runners will not be allowed to advance beyond the next base after a batted ball has been returned to the infield and stopped. If the base runner advances too far, after the ball is stopped in the infield, the umpire will direct the base runner to return to the proper base without the risk of being thrown out.

7. **Overthrows** - Each base runner may advance only one base on an overthrow, per batter, however the base runner may be thrown out.
8. **Cadet League Only** - Base runners may only advance one base on any batted ball that does not leave the infield. Outfielders must play at the edge of the grass until the ball is hit.
9. Base coaches shall not assist runners around the bases with physical contact. The runner will not be called out if the base coach makes contact with a runner in a congratulatory manner (i.e. high fives or pats on the back).
10. **Obstruction** - Any act (physical or otherwise) which impedes the runner is obstruction.

K. GUIDELINES:

1. Umpires assume control of the game or proceedings immediately upon their arrival on the field.
2. The umpire will be in complete control of the game at all times.
3. There shall be no arguing over an umpire's decision. Any dispute shall be discussed and settled by the coach in charge with the umpire in a quiet, calm manner. The umpire shall eject from the game anyone who acts in an unsportsmanlike manner. Spectators should remember that games are for the players. Spectators should cheer positively. Spectators who behave in an abusive, inconsiderate and/or disrespectful manner are not welcome at youth games and may be asked to leave. Anyone acting unsportsmanlike or excessively are subject to ejections, suspensions and or permanent removal from the league.
4. Subsequently, all managers, coaches, players, parents and spectators are required to comply with any request made at any time by any current Department personnel. This includes any umpire currently employed by the Department, the league coordinator, the recreation supervisor.
5. The league coordinator has the authority to reprimand coaches, players & spectators for unsportsmanlike behavior. If the behavior continues after a reprimand, the coordinator has the authority to eject person from game and be forced to leave the park.
6. The foregoing shall apply to any request made by Department personnel relating to the control or administration of any softball game or requests consistent with or relating in any manner to the goals or philosophy of the West Bend Park, Recreation and Forestry Department. Failure to comply with any such request shall be reported to the recreation director and immediate further action will result.
 - a. The West Bend Park, Recreation and Forestry Department appreciates all the volunteers, players, coaches, parents, personnel and everyone else who make this league happen.
 - b. It is very important that everyone involved in the program understands the philosophy that governs the leagues. Inappropriate criticism of coaches, players or umpires will not be tolerated.
 - c. Bring all league concerns directly to the League Coordinator.
 - d. Set a positive example and support the spirit of the league.
7. Carry-ins are not allowed, except for water. This rule applies to players, coaches and spectators. Violators will be asked to leave the park. This rule only applies to Quaas Creek Park.
8. Remember good players, good games, and good sportsmanship make great seasons!