**Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association
Softball Rules 8U League**
***(Supplement to ASA softball)***

# General Game Information

* A complete game is 4 innings.
* All games will end (drop dead time) in 1 hour and 25 minutes, regardless of where you are within the game.
* No new inning will start after 1 hour 15 minutes into the game.
* Teams should be assembled and ready to play 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
* If the game is shortened due to adverse weather conditions or darkness, the game shall be official if 3 full innings have been played.
* All bats must display the ASA (2000 or later) label/stamp.
* The field should be set up with 50’ bases (three large steps in from the permanent base placement).
* Interleague play uses 10” hard balls.

# Team Players

* A team must have 6 players present to start the game. Coach’s discretion will be used to continue the game with less players.
* Players will be rotated to different defensive positions each inning. No player will be allowed to play the same defensive position more than once each game, unless there is a safety issue.
* Each team shall provide a volunteer umpire during the game.  The volunteer umpires on each team will rotate behind home plate when their team is batting. Umpires may be coaches for the team.

# Batting

* In the Spring, the pitching machine shall be used to provide consistent pitches to the girls. A coach may pitch if the machine is broken. During Fall, the tee and coach may pitch.
* Coaches will decide if the batter should start from a Tee or receive pitches. As much as possible, players should start with a pitched ball.
* Interleague play uses coach pitch and tee. Not the pitching machine.

## Machine Pitching:

* + Each batter will receive a maximum of five pitches. The emphasis is five pitches, not five swings.
	+ Please do not pitch more than 5 pitches because more pitches will slow down the game.
	+ The Pitching coach will release the ball in front of the circle around the pitching rubber.
	+ Foul balls and bad pitches are part of the five pitches.
	+ If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will then move to the Tee.

## Batting off the Tee:

* + Each batter will take a maximum of three swings from the Tee.
	+ If the batter does not put the ball in play after three swings from the Tee, the batter is called out.
* All batters must wear a helmet.
* There is no bunting allowed at this level. Any accidental bunt will be considered as a foul ball.
* Any ball that stays inside the base lines is fair and playable except if it is not hit beyond the semi-circle drawn 5 feet from home plate. Any ball that ends up within this semi-circle is a foul ball.
* Batter should be taught to hit and drop the bat rather than throw the bat after hitting the ball. Coaches must ensure that the batter takes her swings safely.
* A half inning is complete when each player in the line-up has batted or 3 outs are executed, whichever occurs first.
* Every available player must bat in a maintained order. An automatic out shall be assessed against a team batting out of order.
* Teams exchange batting orders before the start of the game. Teams shall bat their entire roster of players throughout the game.
* Any player that leaves before the completion of a game must be identified before the game begins.
* Players arriving late will be placed at the end of the order.
* The infield fly rule does NOT apply.

## Last batter

* When the last batter in the lineup comes up to bat in any inning, the coach of the team that is batting will clearly announce to the fielding team/coaches that this is the *“last batter”* prior to the player’s at bat.
* When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners must advance to home unless they are put out by the defense.
* The defense should attempt to make plays at the bases and get the runners out.

# Base Running

* All base runners must wear a helmet.
* There is no stealing allowed. The runners may not leave the base until the ball passes over the plate or is hit by the batter.
* Sliding is allowed, but you may not slide into 1st base or slide head first.
* Once an infielder or outfielder retrieves a hit ball and throws the ball toward any defensive player, or an infielder with the ball touches a base, base runners can advance only to the base that they are running to at the time the ball is thrown or the base was touched.
	+ Exception: When the last batter of the inning hits, all runners must advance to home unless they are put out by the defense.
* If the ball is overthrown, players may not advance beyond the base to which they are running.
	+ Exception: Rule does not apply when the last batter of the inning hits.
* Play stops when all base runners are on a base.
* A courtesy runner is allowed for the catcher who is on base with 2 outs. The substitute runner will be the person who made the second out. The purpose of this option is for the catcher to put on her gear for the change of sides.

# Defense/Fielding

* There is no limit on the number of defensive coaches allowed on the field during a game, but coaches must allow room for the players to play.
* The duties of the defensive coaches include ensuring that all defensive players are in the proper defensive positions before the coach pitches or the ball is placed on the T, including the outfielders staying in the outfield, infielders in the proper place, and catcher in the proper place.
* Coaches should help the players avoid the tendency to move closer to the plate throughout the inning.
* All players are in the field at the same time, no players “sit the bench”.
* Six players are allowed to play in the infield (1st, 2nd, 3rd, SS, P, C); all other players must play in the outfield.
* Outfielders must play in the grass.
* Coaches shall encourage players to make a defensive play and return the ball as quickly as possible to the pitcher’s circle.

# Fields

* The measurements for the Rookie fields are as follows:
	+ 50 feet between the bases
	+ 35 feet from home plate and the pitching rubber
	+ Baseline from home to first base and home to third base.
	+ Right and left batting boxes are 3 feet wide and 7 feet deep.
	+ 8 foot circle chalk line around the pwitching rubber.
* Home team shall be in the first base dugout.
* **Volunteers from the Home team** are responsible for lining and raking the field of play prior to the game.
* **Volunteers from the Visitors team** are responsible for raking the ‘high traffic’ areas of the field at the conclusion of the game.

# Adverse Weather Conditions

A game may be temporarily delayed if it is raining or if lightning is seen. In the case of lightning, players are to immediately go to cars or shelter with a roof. No game can restart until 15 minutes after lightning is last seen. If a game is delayed, the scheduled end time will be extended by the amount of the delay.