

# Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch

2017 ASA Rule Modifications

Adopted January 31, 2017

Inter-league and Select Rules Issued Separately

Where possible, SMGF rules attempt to remain consistent with ASA regional, tournament, inter-league rules. There are some aspects of our league tradition and precedent that emphasize the recreational nature of the spring league and its developmental focus. Spring Season play will be governed by the ASA 2017 Official Rules of Softball applicable to Fastpitch Softball (<http://m.asasoftball.com/Rulebook/mobile.asp>), except as specified in these Rule Modifications.

## I. All Divisions

1. Sportsmanship. All players are expected to participate in practices and in games and show sportsmanlike behavior. Failure to do so may result in participation consequences at the discretion of the head coach and should be reported to the Division Director.
2. Conduct:
  - a. Coaches may not approach a junior umpire to question a call on the field unless accompanied by the senior umpire unless the junior umpire is the plate umpire.
  - b. Umpires will have zero tolerance towards abusive language, gestures, or actions of unsportsmanlike conduct by team administrators, coaches, players, relatives or other spectators. It is the team administrator's responsibility to correct these actions immediately.
  - c. Any person or persons ejected from the game will not be permitted to return for the remainder of the game AND will be subject to discipline by the league's Board of Directors. Any complaint against an umpire will be directed to the Umpire-In-Charge (UIC).
3. Safety.
  - a. Face shields are required on all batting helmets and the NOCSAE certification label shall be visible.
  - b. Pitchers in all divisions (except 6U), must wear a protective face mask while playing the pitching position.
  - c. A batter who unintentionally throws her bat will be issued a warning by the umpire for the first offense, and shall be declared out for any subsequent offense. For all offenses after the first warning, a dead ball will be declared and all runners returned to the base previously occupied at the time of the pitch.
  - d. Per ASA Rule, interference shall be called for an unintentionally thrown bat that interferes with a fielder making a play (modifies R/S 52).
  - e. A player who intentionally throws her bat will be ejected per ASA rules (R/S 52).
4. Game time.
  - a. Start time shall be declared by the umpire after all warm-up pitches have been completed and the umpire asks the catcher to throw down to second base.
  - b. Time restrictions shall be enforced by the umpire, who has the authority and discretion to add time to the game should any team be judged to cause a delay for reasons not allowed by ASA Rules.
  - c. Between inning time restrictions shall be strictly applied at all divisions.
  - d. Drop-dead restrictions provide that games not completed in the time frame shall revert back to the previously completed inning. Should the home team tie the game or gain the lead in the bottom half of the inning when time expires, the score shall not revert back and the home team shall be declared the winner or a tie declared at drop-dead. A game is official at drop dead.

5. Game play.

- a. All divisions shall bat round-robin (all available players hit).
- b. Free defensive substitution (non-starters may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations) is allowed except as modified in each division below.
- c. No player shall sit on the bench consecutive defensive innings. Exceptions may be made in case of illness or injury.
- d. A combination of pitchers and catchers to complete an inning, satisfying the minimum pitching or catching requirements, shall be allowed at the discretion of the umpire for injury only.
- e. A courtesy runner will be allowed for a pitcher or catcher of record. Use of courtesy runners is encouraged to keep the game moving. The courtesy runner shall be the last eligible batter (the player on the lineup card furthest from the current batter). Should this player be the pitcher or catcher of record or on base, the player next furthest from the batter may be used as a courtesy runner. Courtesy runners may not have a courtesy runner. If it is the courtesy runner's turn to bat and she is still on base, the pitcher or catcher she ran for will return to the base or the offense will be charged with an out.

6. Minimum number of players ("Short-handed rule")

- a. This section does not apply to the 6U division.
- b. A team may start with 7 players. Teams that cannot field seven players to start will forfeit (in tournament play only).
- c. Teams must bat all of its players available at the game.
- d. There will be no "automatic out" for non-arriving or late-arriving players. Late arrivals must be inserted into the lineup in order of their arrival, at the bottom of the batting order.
- e. Six (6) players are required to complete a game, but if a team plays with less than 7 players, an out will be recorded for the vacated batting order slot where the seventh player was. Should two players leave at the same time dropping the team to six (6) players, the automatic out will be recorded for the player closest to the bottom of the batting order.
- f. If a team knows in advance that they will be shorthanded, a maximum of three players may be borrowed from other teams within the league from the same or lower age classification to a maximum of nine players. The borrowed player(s) must bat last and play outfield positions. Players may not be recruited once the game has begun.
- g. There will be no "automatic out" for players who leave the game early, provided the need to depart is brought to the attention of the plate umpire and team representatives at the plate meeting (prior to the start of the game).
- h. If a player is injured during the game and cannot bat, there will be an "automatic out" for the player's next at-bat only. Subsequent at-bats for this player will not incur an out.

7. Protests. Protocol for filing a protest, including the timing of the protest, shall be enforced per ASA Rules with the following exceptions: An official written protest listing the grounds for protest must also be lodged with the Umpire-in-Chief within 24 hours of the completion of the game. If minimum playing time rules are not followed then there will be a forfeit by the team committing the violation. Upon receipt, the Umpire in Chief will review the grounds for protest, evaluate the rule in question, and render a decision within 48 hours. Should the protest involve a game in a division coached by the UIC, the board shall name a deputy UIC to rule on the protest. Any decision that would involve a forfeit shall be recommended by the UIC to the division director, and shall be formally approved by the board of directors. Upheld protests for playing rules shall follow ASA Guidelines.

## II. 6U Division

1. Score is not kept in the 6U Division.
2. A rostered coach from the team batting will pitch to all batters. The coach pitcher need not be in contact with the pitcher's plate, but does need to deliver the pitch from inside the pitching circle. If the batter does not hit the ball on four pitched balls, the tee will be placed and she will be allowed to hit from the tee. The umpire may grant additional pitches for foul balls.
3. There will be a 12-foot arc in front of home plate extending from the first base line to the third base line. A ball must be hit beyond the arc to be called fair and playable. If the ball is not hit beyond the arc it will be considered a foul ball.
4. There are no strikeouts or walks.
5. There is no stealing.
6. Base runners cannot leave their bases until the ball is hit and can advance only when the ball is hit.
7. For any fair ball, base runners are stopped when the ball is returned to the pitching circle. If the runner advances past the halfway point to the next base after the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitcher's circle, she can advance to the next base.
8. Base runners may advance only one base on an overthrow.
9. Outs will be declared; however, per provision 10, the half-inning shall not end until the entire order has batted.
10. The entire batting order bats in each half-inning. After the entire team has batted, that team will take the field, the defensive team will come to bat, and this will be considered the end of the half-inning.
11. All players on the team will be out in the field on defense; no player should sit on the bench while her team is playing defense (but may do so due to injury or illness).
12. Two coaches may be on the field for the defensive team. The coach may not aid or assist any fielder, or interfere with the ball or any offensive player.
13. If a team has fewer than 6 players, they should borrow players from the opposing team.
14. Coaches and spectators are encouraged to cheer for both teams playing and thank the umpire after each game.
15. Teams will have a maximum of 1 hour 20 minutes on the field. Approximately 20 minutes should be used for shared practice time before the game, and remaining 60 minutes should be game format.
16. Have fun with the girls; they're only this small ..... once.

## III. 8U Division

**Note: Coach- Pitch will be used for the Spring 2017 season**

### a. 8U Game and Equipment Information

1. ASA 10" RIF balls will be used (SR10 RYS Level 1 Safety Ball, Red Seam).
2. No scores or standings will be kept until the season-ending tournament.
3. Scoring limit: While no official score is kept, teams are limited to three runs per half-inning during the first three innings, and unlimited runs thereafter.
4. Time limit: Games shall "drop dead" at 1 hour 30 minutes, regardless of whether the inning is complete. This may be modified for playoff play.
5. Defense fields 10 players, and must show 4 outfielders (an outfielder is defined as a player behind the baseline) until the ball is put in play. While playing with less than 10 players under the "short-handed rule", however, a team need not field four outfielders. If 10 players are available for play, all 10 must be fielded.
6. Free defensive substitution (non-starting players may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations), except that (1) all players must play at least one complete inning in the infield, and (2) all players must play at least two innings on defense.
7. One and only one coach may be on the field for the defensive team and must remain on the grass at all times. The coach may not aid or assist any fielder, or interfere with the ball or any offensive player.

8. Pitching and catching limitation: all teams must show at least two pitchers and two catchers in each game. No pitcher/catcher can pitch/catch more than the entire game, minus 3 consecutive outs or one inning.
9. Batting order is not determined by defensive position. Failure to comply with minimum playing rules will result in an incident report being filed and, if this occurs during the playoffs, there will be a forfeit by the team committing the violation. A formal protest must be filed by the offended team: the offended team must bring the infraction to the attention of the umpire by filing a protest (ASA protest procedures must be followed).

#### **b. 8U Playing Rules**

1. Stealing
  - a. Not permitted in the first half of the season.
  - b. No stealing during coach-pitch.
  - c. Beginning April 1, 2017, stealing will be permitted, limited to one base per pitch, regardless of defensive reaction.
  - d. Home plate is "closed" (no stealing of home). A runner may legally score only as the result of a batted ball or base award(s) by the umpire as allowed by ASA rules
2. Walks are not permitted on any batter. The batter must put the ball in play or strike out.
3. Players will pitch and the umpire will call balls and strikes while the player is pitching.
4. Coach-pitch: After four balls by the pitcher, a trained/certified coach shall pitch and shall assume the active count (balls and strikes).
  - a. No bunting during coach-pitch.
  - a. The coach must pitch with at least one foot on the 30-foot rubber.
  - b. The coach must pitch a flat, line drive pitch. The pitch should not contain much if any arch to it.
  - c. Each pitch shall be counted as a ball or strike, as judged by the umpire. A batter shall be allowed to continue her at bat after three coach pitches only if she hits a foul ball (otherwise the batter is out after three coach pitches).
  - d. Coach-pitchers shall leave the field once a ball is put in play, but without interfering or obstructing defensive players and baserunners.
  - e. No base award for batters hit by a pitched ball from the coach-pitcher.
  - f. The defensive pitcher shall remain adjacent to or behind the coach-pitcher and must have at least one foot in the pitcher's circle during a coach pitch.
5. A caught foul ball at any time during coach pitch shall be an out, per ASA rules. A caught foul tip on strike three is an out, per ASA rules. A dropped foul tip, at any time, is a foul ball.
6. Coach Interference.
  - a. Coaches may not coach from the pitching circle (either verbally or non-verbally); this includes instructing a batter where to stand or how to bat. Effect: The coach shall receive a warning from the umpire.
  - b. The coach-pitcher shall not interfere with any defensive player making a play on the ball or a runner. Coaches who are hit by a batted ball after pitching are guilty of interference. Effect: The ball is dead and the batter runner shall be called out.
  - c. Offensive coaches who interfere with a live ball after an initial play has been made are guilty of interference. Effect: The ball will be dead and the runner closest to home shall be called out.
  - d. Defensive coaches who interfere with a live ball are guilty of interference. Effect, the ball is dead and player shall be awarded one base from the time of the infraction.
7. Dropped third strike rule will NOT be in effect.
8. The infield fly rule will NOT be in effect.
9. Outfielders must be positioned behind the baseline until the ball is pitched.
10. A play ends (also during coach pitch) when the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitching circle and baserunners have completed their base-running responsibilities. Base awards shall apply for balls thrown out of play at any time (including the return throw to the pitcher). Coaches may not touch a live ball at any time (coaches' interference awards shall apply).

## IV. 10U Division

### a. 10U Game and Equipment Information

1. ASA 11" RIF FP balls will be used.
2. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
3. No scores or standings will be kept until the season-ending tournament.
4. Scoring limit: Four runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
5. Time limit: No new inning at 1 hour 30 minutes, "drop dead" at 1 hour 45 minutes. This may be modified for playoff play.
6. Free defensive substitution (non-starting players may play at any time and players may be substituted and return to any position, subject to the pitching limitations), except:
  - a. All players must play at least one complete inning in the infield, and
  - b. All players must play at least two innings on defense. Batting order is not determined by defensive position.
  - c. Failure to comply with minimum playing rules will result in forfeiture by the team committing the violation, provided that the offended team files a protest as required by ASA rules.
7. Protests shall be ruled on with Umpire in Chief, and forfeitures recommended to the Board of Directors
8. Mercy Rule: The ASA "run ahead rule" shall be in effect, modified as follows: If either team is leading by at least (i) 15 runs after the completion of 4 complete innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is leading), or (ii) 8 runs after the completion of 5 complete innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the game shall end at the conclusion of such inning (or half-inning, as the case may be).
9. Pitching and catching limitation: All teams must show at least two pitchers and two catchers in each game. No Pitcher/Catcher can pitch/catch more than the entire game, minus 3 consecutive outs or one inning.

### b. 10U Playing Rules

1. Stealing is unlimited except per ASA rules.
2. The dropped third strike rule is in effect per ASA rules.
3. The Infield Fly Rule is in effect per ASA rules. (With less than two outs and runners on first and second (or bases loaded), on an infield fly the batter is automatically out and the runners advance at their own risk.)
4. Play shall be live on return throws to the pitcher. A play ends when the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitching circle and baserunners have completed their base-running responsibilities.

## V. 12U Division

### a. 12U Game and Equipment Information

1. ASA approved 12" balls will be used.
2. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
3. No scores or standings will be kept until the season-ending tournament.
4. Scoring limit: Four runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
5. Time limit: No new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes, drop dead at 1 hour 45 minutes.
6. All players must play a minimum of 6 outs on defense by the end of the 4th inning and 9 outs on defense by the end of the 5th inning. Exception: if a player arrives after the start of the second inning, the foregoing shall not apply.
7. Mercy Rule: The ASA "run-ahead rule" shall be in effect, modified as follows: If either team is leading by at least (i) 15 runs after the completion of 4 complete innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is leading), or (ii) 8 runs after the completion of 5 complete innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the game shall end at the conclusion of such inning (or half-inning, as the case may be).

### b. 12U Playing Rules

1. Stealing is unlimited except per ASA rules.
2. The "dropped third strike" is in effect per ASA rules.

3. The Infield Fly Rule is in effect per ASA rules. (With less than two outs and runners on first and second (or bases loaded), on an infield fly the batter is automatically out and the runners advance at their own risk.)
4. Play shall be live on return throws to the pitcher. A play ends when the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitching circle and baserunners have completed their base-running responsibilities.

## **VI. 14U Division**

1. ASA approved 12" balls will be used.
2. LA/South Bay ASA District Inter-league Rules shall govern all inter-league games.
3. Metal cleats shall be allowed.
4. Scoring Limit: Six runs per half-inning during the first three innings, unlimited thereafter.
5. Time limit: no new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes, drop dead at 1 hour 45 minutes.
6. The "dropped third strike" is in effect per ASA rules.
7. The Infield Fly Rule is in effect per ASA rules. (With less than two outs and runners on first and second (or bases loaded), on an infield fly the batter is automatically out and the runners advance at their own risk.)