

All games will be played in accordance with ASA Official Softball Rules with the following local exceptions:

1. Weekday and weekend session time will be split between a practice and game. Practice time is essential to ensure proper development of the players and to teach the necessary skills of the game. The schedule below indicates the amount of session time that must be allocated to practice and the balance of time will consist of a game. After a game has started, no new inning is to start after 1 hour and 20 minutes of session time.
 - a. Opening day through April 30th 45 minutes
 - b. May 1st through end of season 30 Minutes
2. Ten (10) fielders will be allowed on the field, four (4) of who must be gapped in the outfield and may not routinely make plays in the infield. **Please do not put more than ten (10) players in the field at any time as it disrupts the players understanding of position roles.**
3. All players who appear for the game will be included in the batting order. If a player arrives late, that player will be inserted into the lineup as the last batter.
4. There will be no stealing, no leading, no bunting, no infield fly rule and no running to first on a dropped third strike.
5. The distance between bases will be fifty-five (55) feet. **Please do not place the bases closer to home plate as it may increase the risk of injury.**
6. It is the responsibility of the base runner to avoid contact with a fielder who is making or about to make a play. A runner must not collide with or run into a fielder in any situation. The runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact by running around the fielder.
7. A half inning will end when three outs are made or when the team at bat has batted around (regardless of the number of outs). Coaches must announce the last batter when a team bats around. Both teams will bat around to the number of players of the team which has the most players (e.g., if team #1 has 10 players and team #2 has 8 players, a bat around inning would be 10 players for each team).
8. Speed up rules will apply. Coaches are strongly encouraged to identify the next inning’s catcher before the half inning begins. If that player reaches base while batting, the batting team will be permitted to substitute a runner for the catcher.
9. A runner cannot advance on an overthrow. There should be no advancing once the ball gets to the pitcher’s mound.
10. Any player who does not start in the field may not sit a second inning until all players who appear for the game have sat out one inning.
11. Bat throwing is extremely dangerous and must be controlled. A player will receive one warning for throwing a bat and will be called out for a second offense.
12. Coaches must coach players to be aggressive at bat. We need to have the players swing at the pitch and attempt to put the ball in play. Balls & strikes will be called and hence there will walks and strikeouts. **The strike zone should be very large – ankles to shoulders!**
13. All players will be required to wear a batting helmet, fitted with an appropriate cage (or plexiglass protector) for the face, when batting or running the bases. Each team’s equipment bag will include a few batting helmets, but players are encouraged to bring their own.
14. **Pitching Rules for AAA.** The AAA program is an important transition period in the Chatham Softball program where girls first learn how to pitch. We know that games may drag on, pitchers may have

difficulty throwing strikes, and there will be a number of walks. But, it’s important that we teach girls how to pitch early on, before they move on to more competitive leagues. For the 2012 season, our pitching rules are as follows:

- a. The pitching distance will be thirty-two (32) feet. Coaches should pace off 8 feet from the front of the existing rubber (which is 40 feet) and drop in a pitching rubber prior to the game.
- b. **Primary pitcher.** Each team will be assigned at least one (1) primary pitcher. Coaches are strongly encouraged to pitch your primary pitcher at least three (3) innings of each game that the primary pitcher attends. Standard softball pitching rules apply to each team’s primary pitcher; i.e., no coach pitching is permitted unless the pitcher is in obvious distress.
- c. **Non-primary pitchers.** With ten (10) AAA teams, we may not have enough developed pitchers to follow standard pitching guidelines for this age. When using non-primary pitchers, coaches are permitted to follow the modified pitching program below, if necessary:
 - i. Non-primary pitchers must follow standard softball pitching guidelines until two (2) walks are allowed in an inning. Once two (2) baserunners reach by walk, the nonprimary pitcher will continue to pitch until either: (a) the batter puts the ball in play, (b) the batter makes an out, or (c) the pitcher throws four (4) balls out of the strike zone.
 - ii. In the case of (c), a coach from the fielding team is permitted to pitch to the opposing batter until the player puts the ball in play or makes an out. The non-primary pitcher must field the position while the coach is pitching.
- d. **Coaches should not use games to try out new pitchers!** Any new players interested in pitching should either (i) be directed to attend the Chatham Recreation-sponsored pitching clinics, or (ii) work with their AAA League coaches at practices to perfect their pitching.
- e. **Catchers.** Please use discretion in choosing catchers. A catcher must be able to catch the ball and throw it back to the pitcher. A lazy catcher can cause significant delays during the game.
- f. If things don’t work out as the season progresses, we will evaluate and make some modifications down the road. Please make every effort to let pitchers pitch so that they can learn how to handle pressure situations.

15. Make it fun!