

## PHILOSOPHY

The focus of the league is to build on the player’s softball skills and for everyone to have FUN. Coaches should focus on the key fundamentals to help the players prepare for growth

Key Fundamentals to focus on include:

1. Teaching players to catch the ball properly (e.g., using 2 hands),
2. Teaching proper throwing form (making a “T” figure before throwing, stepping directly toward the target),
3. Holding the bat properly (e.g., hands together, front-side hand on the bottom, hands and forearms in inverted “V” formation),
4. Properly running the bases (including running through first base),
5. Introducing sliding into bases,
6. Introducing and reinforcing the mental aspects of the game including force-plays, and
7. Learning to consistently hit a coach-pitched ball (using the tee to develop fundamentals)

We are asking all coaches, whether they are running a private practice or sharing the field with another team, to create at least 3 different skills stations during each session. The objective is to coach approximately 25 minutes of skills and drills at these stations, and then end the session with a 2-3 inning game. A good template for these stations would be the following:

- Station #1 – 3-4 players working on grounders and force plays (in the infield),
- Station #2 – 3-4 players working on catching regular tosses and pop-ups (in left field), and
- Station #3 – 3-4 players hitting coached pitched balls (or tees for new players) one batter, 1 on deck batter, 1 fielder chasing balls

You will need to find creative ways to keep the girls interested: How many can they catch in a row? Who can hit this bucket on a throw after a fielded ground ball? Who can chase down the most balls hit from the tee? Use the internet for good ideas. You should always end your skills sessions with the girls “running the bases”.

Provided that players can arrive on time, your sessions (whether there is a game or not) should be no longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes. Good luck and keep it fun.

## BASIC GAME RULES

1. All players will be included in the batting order. If a player appears late for a game, she will be inserted last in the batting order.
2. The batting order should be changed from game to game to give all players the opportunity to lead off, bat third, bat cleanup, etc.
3. Players should be introduced to coach pitch as soon as possible; utilizing the tee when there are challenges to move things along.
4. There will no stealing, leading off and no infield fly rule.
5. Coaches should teach runners the proper way to run the bases (i.e. run through 1st base, round the corner of the base if running to the next base, etc). Adult coaches should coach 1st and 3rd base to give direction to the runner to reinforce proper technique.
6. If a player hits a long drive or a ball into the gap, she may try for an extra base hit. The 1st base coach will give the runner direction to proceed.

7. The play is dead once the ball hits the infield.
8. 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 a fielder in any situation.
9. Pitching will be done by coaches. Pitching will be done underhand from approximately 25 feet. Early on, decrease the distance to help the hitter make contact.
10. A half inning will end when three outs are made when the team at bat has hit through the entire lineup (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.
11. A runner cannot advance on an overthrow. They can only go to the base they were running to.
12. A game will consist of 3-4 innings and your combined session should end no later than 1 hour and 15 minutes.
13. Any player who does not start in the field may not sit a second inning until all players who appear for a game have sat out one inning.
14. Fielding positions will be 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, shortstop and pitcher (please make sure the pitcher is a safe distance from the batter and not blocked by the pitching coach. All other players should spread out in the outfield (please do not place an extra fielder directly on 2<sup>nd</sup> base). No one will field the catcher position. All players should be rotated to give them the chance to play all positions.
15. Coaches should coach players to be aggressive at bat. We need to have the players swing at all good pitches to put the ball into play.