

# FRONTENAC COUNTY MINOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION (FCMSA)

## RULES & REGULATIONS for U7, U9 & U11

\*Note – Please see the ICSA Rules and Regulations for U13 levels and above.

### 1. GENERAL

1.1. Unless otherwise stated in the FCMSA Constitution, Bylaws or Rules of play, Games for all divisions will be governed by the current “Official Guide and Rule Book” of the Canadian Amateur Softball Association (Softball Canada), PWSA and OASA.

### 2. UMPIRES AND SOFTBALLS

2.1. Provision of umpires is the responsibility of the home team. It is required that all umpires be carded, or in the process of being carded, for the current year.

2.1.1. U7 & U9 levels do not require umpires, but a meeting at the plate is mandatory for coaches to discuss rules before the game begins.

2.1.2. U11 level may use Junior Umpires and only require one per game during the regular season. In some cases there may be two umpires assigned. A meeting at the plate is mandatory for coaches to discuss rules before the game begins.

2.2 Provision of balls is the responsibility of the home team.

2.2.1. U7 & U9 levels use 11” indoor balls.

2.2.2. U11 level uses 11” Red Dot softballs.

### 3. FIELD LINING & BASES

#### 3.1. Field Lining

3.1.1. It is the home team’s responsibility to ensure bases are properly placed and fields are lined prior to game time. Bases are 45 feet apart. Pitching mound is 30 feet from home plate – 35 feet for U11.

3.1.2. Lining will include the foul line, the batter’s box and the pitching circle.

3.2. A safety base must be used at first base and defensive players are to play the white bag only.

### 4. SAFETY EQUIPMENT

#### 4.1. Batting Helmets

**4.1.1.** U7, U9 and U11 batting helmets must have a chin straps and face cage. Chin straps must be fastened and worn by all batters, batters on deck, base runners and by any base coach under 17 years of age.

## **4.2. Catchers' Equipment**

**4.2.1.** Catchers must wear a helmet (without strap), face mask, chest protector, safety cup, shin pads with kneecap protector, and throat guard at all times while catching for a pitcher (throat guards are not required if face mask has throat extension).

**4.2.2.** U11 - Anyone warming up a pitcher must wear face mask.

## **4.3. U11 Pitcher's Mask**

**4.3.1.** Pitchers are required to wear a defensive face shield (pitching mask).

## **4.4. First Aid**

**4.4.1.** First aid kits are required for all teams.

## **4.5. U11 Uniforms**

**4.5.1.** Shorts are not permitted. Long legged pants only.

# **5. BATTING**

**5.1.** All teams will bat in a continuous order for the whole lineup, unless the player has been benched due to derogatory behavior, illness or injury.

## **5.2. U7**

**5.2.1.** It is recommended that the batting order should change each game so a different player leads off each game.

**5.2.2.** Players have the choice to be pitched to first. If after 3 pitches they haven't hit the ball the Tee will be used. They have unlimited attempts to hit off the Tee. There is no infield fly rule.

**5.2.3.** All players have a turn at bat each inning. The offensive team is required to notify the defensive team once the last batter is at bat.

## **5.3. U9**

**5.3.1.** A different player should lead the batting order each game.

**5.3.2.** Only one batter is allowed in the on deck circle. All other players must remain in the dugout.

**5.3.3.** Each batter gets 5 pitches. If the last pitch/swing is fouled, additional pitches will be granted. There is no limit on fouled balls. (Teach your batters to always swing at the last pitch!)

**5.3.4.** The coach-pitcher will advise the batter of the last pitch. No balls or strikes will be called. There are no walks or free bases, even if the batter is hit by a pitch from a coach-pitcher.

**5.3.5.** The batter will be called out if there is no contact with the ball on the 5<sup>th</sup> or last pitch.

**5.3.6.** Bunting is not permitted. There is no infield fly rule.

#### **5.4. U11**

**5.4.1.** Players arriving late can be added to bottom of the line-up anytime, with notification to the other team.

**5.4.2.** Only one batter is allowed in the on deck circle. All other players must remain in the dugout.

**5.4.3.** Batters are out after three strikes have crossed the plate without a hit. No runners may advance to first base on a dropped third strike. If the batter receives 4 balls, then the coach may pitch the remainder of the count to the batter. Foul ball on pitch will be replayed. If the coach pitched ball is not hittable, the batter is out. Batters cannot be walked. Batters are encouraged to swing at pitches and not wait for the coach to pitch to them.

**5.4.4.** Batters may take a base if they are hit by a pitch.

**5.4.5.** Bunting is not permitted. There is no infield fly rule.

#### **6. BASE RUNNING**

**6.1.** Runners at all levels (U7, U9 and U11) must stay in contact with the base until the ball is hit. There is no lead off or stealing of bases. Sliding is allowed at all levels.

**6.1.1.** Clarification on base running for U9 & U11 – Players may take the bases they would get on a clean play. If a defensive player makes an error, players should remain on their bases. Here are a few examples:

**Example 1** - The catcher misses the pitch and is looking for it behind the plate. All runners should stay on their bases.

**Example 2** - The ball is hit past the infield into the outfield and would be added to the scorebook as a double (if we were keeping score). All runners may advance a base or two as long as the ball is being played cleanly without errors. When the ball is returned to the infield time will be called. If a runner is halfway to a base, they may complete their way to the base.

**Example 3** - The ball is hit to the shortstop and they bobble it (an error), then the runners should stop advancing. This would be added to the scorebook as a single if played cleanly (and if we were keeping score), but because it was bobbled it would be entered as an error and is considered stealing if the runner takes advantage and advances to second base. In U9 & U11 we do not allow our runners to take advantage of errors to move through the bases.

At the U9 level it may be easier to take one bag per play as it is rare for a batter to hit a ball into the outfield cleanly at this stage. Kids at these levels are learning a lot and many are playing softball for the first time. There is A LOT to learn. Emphasis should be on having fun while learning the basics of the game.

**6.2.** Players are not called out for lead off. Coaches should send the runner back to the base with an explanation.

**6.3.** Players may not advance to the next base on an overthrow.

**6.4.** All base runners must stop when the ball is under control in the infield.

**6.5.** Base runners who have been called out may not continue to run the bases.

**6.6.** In U7 the last batter continues to run all the bases to try and get to home plate. Defensive players are encouraged to return the ball to the catcher or other defensive player touching home plate.

**6.7.** In U9 the last batter will continue to run the bases until they touch home or get out.

## **7. INNINGS & GAME TIME**

### **7.1. U7**

**7.1.1.** There will be two innings played per game. Both teams will bat through the entire batting order of the largest team (e.g. Team #1 has 11 players, Team #2 has 8 players, Team #2 would bat through their 8 players and an additional 3 to make 11).

### **7.2. U9**

**7.2.1.** All players bat once an inning. A ½ inning will be considered complete when all batters in the lineup have batted and all runners have touched all the bases. Length of games are 5 innings maximum. No new innings should begin after one hour.

### **7.3. U11**

**7.3.1.** Length of games are 5 innings maximum. No new innings should begin after one hour and twenty minutes.

**7.3.2.** One hour of playing time constitutes a game and the score reverts to the last completed inning. Last inning will be called and then home team is allowed to finish the inning regardless of score, but does not have to be played if the Home team is winning. **No new innings after the last inning is called regardless of time remaining.**

**8. MERCY RULE** - A maximum of six (6) runs may be earned in any one inning. All innings are six (6) run mercy and ALL innings are CLOSED for U11 and up.

**8.1. U7 & U9** – no mercy rules is applied since they do not keep score.

**8.2. U11** – Mercy rules apply to innings but not for games.

## **9. SUBSTITUTIONS & DEFENSIVE PLAY**

**9.1.** Players may be inserted into the field at will. Players are “out” as usual. Runners may be substituted by the last out of the inning for injured players only, whose injury prevents them from running. In all divisions the catcher runner may be replaced with the last person out, to allow the catcher to suit up to prevent game delays.

### **9.2. U7**

**9.2.1.** All players can be out on the field and should rotate positions on the field.

**9.2.2.** During regular league play and playoffs, any registered player shall not sit out two consecutive innings on defense.

### **9.3. U9**

**9.3.1.** Six infielders (including a catcher) and all remaining players are outfielders. The catcher must be properly equipped. Outfielders must start the play at least ten feet behind the base path. Although this should rarely occur, outfielders are allowed to make a play on the base.

**9.3.2.** During regular league play and playoffs, any registered player shall not sit out two consecutive innings on defense. Coaches must document the defensive positions of all players during the game. No player shall sit a second inning before every player has sat one inning. The following exceptions will apply: a) Should a player arrive late for a game, b) Should a player act in a derogatory manner towards coaches, or other players, c) Should a player become sick or injured during a game.

### **9.4. U11**

**9.4.1.** Six infielders (including a catcher) and three outfielders as in regular softball. The catcher must be properly equipped. Outfielders must start the play at least ten feet behind the base path and must be on the grass. Outfielders are allowed to make a play on the base.

**9.4.2.** During regular league play and playoffs, any registered player shall not sit out two consecutive innings on defense. Doing so may result in forfeiture of the game. Coaches must document the defensive positions of all players during the game. If a game is protested, the defensive documents must be submitted to the Plate Umpire, normal protest procedure to apply. The following exceptions will apply: a) Should a player arrive late for a game, b) Should a player act in a derogatory manner towards coaches, players or umpires, c) Should a player become sick or injured during a game. Note: No player shall sit a second inning before every player has sat one inning. No player shall sit a third inning before every player has sat 2 innings.

## **10. PITCHING**

## **10.1. U9**

**10.1.1.** The coach-pitcher should stand an appropriate distance from home plate. The fielding team's pitcher may play in the field beside the batting team's coach-pitcher but may not be closer than 2 feet behind them.

## **10.2. U11**

**10.2.1.** If a pitcher hits 3 batters in the same inning, that pitcher is retired from pitching for the remainder of the game. A U11 pitcher may pitch a **maximum of two (2) consecutive innings** per game. This rule must be used with Rule #9.4.2...Everyone must sit once before any player sits twice in a game.

**10.2.2.** Refer to Softball Canada new pitching rules.

- a) Pitchers must start with one foot on the rubber
- b) Pitchers may hop, but must stay in the shoot
- c) Pitchers must come to a full stop before the next pitch

**10.2.3.** A team is permitted two defensive conferences per inning. With the third conference, the pitcher must be removed from the pitcher position for the balance of the inning.

**10.2.4.** Pitchers struggling to put the ball in the strike zone using full windmill will be encouraged to pitch underhand.

**10.2.5.** **If the batter receives 4 balls, then the coach may pitch the remainder of the count to the batter. Foul ball on pitch will be replayed. If the coach pitched ball is not hittable, the batter is out. Batters cannot be walked. Pitchers will remain beside the coach and the coach must use the pitching rubber at 30 feet.**

## **11. COACHING POSITIONS**

### **11.1. U7**

**11.1.1.** Offensively, only base coaches and the coach-pitcher will take positions on the playing field during a game.

**11.1.2.** Defensively, parents and coaches are encouraged to join their kids on the field to help them learn the game. This is up to the discretion of the coach.

### **11.2. U9**

**11.2.1.** Offensively, only base coaches and the coach-pitcher will take positions on the playing field during a game.

**11.2.2.** Defensively, two coaches may be in the outfield to help instruct their team. They must stay 10 feet behind the base line during play. One additional defensive coach should be with the catcher to keep them safe and help get the catcher into position once the ball is in play.

### **11.3. U11**

**11.3.1.** Offensively, only base coaches will take positions on the playing field during a game, unless the coach is required to pitch once 4 balls have been called.

**11.2.2.** Defensively, no coaches are permitted on the field.

## **12. SCOREKEEPING**

**12.1. U7 & U9** do not keep score.

### **12.2. U11**

**12.2.1.** First names, last names and numbers must be provided on the score sheet.

**12.2.2.** Tied games are acceptable in league play.

**12.2.3.** In case of ejection, the coach shall have the person's name, time, and date of ejection put in scorebook and signed by plate umpire and/or coaches.

**12.2.4.** Numbered shirts are required for U11 division and above.

**12.2.5.** In case of weather or cancellation of a game by an official and when two innings have been completed, the score of the game will revert to the last fully completed inning. Games under 2 innings can be rescheduled or cancelled.

## **13. TOURNAMENTS**

**13.1. U7 & U9** play two (2) games per team. All players receive a participation medal.

### **13.2. U11**

**13.2.1.** Standings will be determined prior to the tournament by using the standings at the end of the regular season.

**13.2.2.** The U11 tournament will be an A and B division. No team will play more than three (3) games in one day.

**13.2.3.** Regular rules of play time limits will apply in tournament games, with the exception that championship games have no time limit.

**13.2.4.** If a tournament game is tied after time is up or after all innings have been completed, whichever rule is applicable, the game continues for the next two (2) innings. If still tied,

international rules will apply (i.e. inning is started with the last out of the previous inning on second base).

**13.2.5.** Players must play a minimum of four (4) regular games to be eligible for tournament games.

## **14. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

**14.1.** Effective August 2022, we have a Zero Tolerance Policy for drinking/drugs during the game. This is not limited to just players but also spectators and includes before, during and after the game on ball grounds. Spectators who are found drinking or doing drugs on the ball grounds will be asked to leave. Player(s) caught drinking or doing drugs will be asked to leave and will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the season. If anyone who is asked to leave refuses to comply, the police will be called and the player(s) will not be allowed to play the following season either.

**14.2.** Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted on the fields or benches. If you need to light up, please be respectful and step away.

**14.3.** Aggressive behaviour (yelling, swearing or threats of any kind, etc.) will not be tolerated and will result in eviction from the ball grounds. If anyone who is asked to leave refuses to comply, the police will be called.

**14.4.** Bat and helmet throwing is considered a serious offence and will not be tolerated. Players and/or coaches will be ejected from the game and suspended from the next two (2) regular games. Coaches may bring any issues they are experiencing to their convenors for help.

## **15. EJECTIONS/SUSPENSIONS**

**15.1.** Any of the above violations may result in players, coaches, managers, or spectators being ejected/suspended, and shall result in automatic ejection from the game. Failure to comply with the Umpire may result in forfeiture of the game. An umpire's report is required for all ejections and formal protests sent to FCMSA Umpire In Chief. Failure to submit a report could lead to a fine for that umpire association.

**15.2.** A game ejection for any reason carries an automatic further 1 game suspension (excluding the game the ejection occurred in). Depending on the cause of the offence, further suspension may be set by the Convenor in conjunction with FCMSA.

**15.3.** A player, coach, manager, umpire or FCMSA area representative/convenor may be suspended for any other reason by their own association or if there is a majority consent of the FCMSA executive.

**15.4.** Suspensions will continue into the next softball season and FCMSA will honor other softball association suspensions.

**15.5.** All suspensions must be recorded and the following people notified: the appropriate convenor, the FCMSA Secretary and the FCMSA Chairperson/President. The Convenor will notify the opposing coaches of any suspended players or coaches.

**15.6.** All ejections and suspensions beyond the one game mandatory may be appealed to the appropriate Convenor in conjunction with FCMSA. All appeals should be made within 24 hours from the suspension.

**15.7.** Player Ejection – Teams can start game play with 8 players in regular game play. If there is an ejection that reduces the team to 8 players, they cannot continue the game. If the team starts with 9 and there's an ejection reducing the number of players to 8, the game is over and the team with the ejection forfeits the game, regardless of the score. If there are more than 9 players to begin and one player is ejected, the game will proceed (only for divisions U13 and above).

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the above rules or regulations, please contact your convenor or email us at [FCMSApres@gmail.com](mailto:FCMSApres@gmail.com)