

# ***2025 Rules and Regulations – Major Softball***

This policy is intended for Regular Season games only.

Please refer to the **BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC. SOFTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES** book for all rules with the exception of the following special rules:

## **A. Players:**

1. All twelve (12) year old players are expected to play in the Major division.  
(See Babe Ruth 10U Division section for exception) League age is determined by player age on December 31 of the previous year.
2. Each team shall consist of no more than fifteen (15) players.
3. Each team shall be composed of not more than eight (8) twelve (12) year old players unless approved by the Directors.

## **B. Game Logistics**

All 12U and 10U games shall consist of **six (6) innings**, unless the home team leads at the end of 5½ innings. The length of all games will be limited to **1.5 hours**, with the understanding that a new inning may not start after 1.5 hours but may conclude after the 1.5 hour limit. Coaches need to be aware of the game time so that the 1.5 hour time limit doesn't catch them by surprise. Prior to the start of the last inning, the head coach of each team and the plate umpire must agree that the inning about to start is the game's last inning (unless, of course, it's the 6th inning). There should be emphasis on progression of ability and skills after the mid-point of the season. Such as: pitchers moving back to 40 feet from 35 and more aggressive base running/stealing/dropped-third-strike.

1. The plate umpire is the official time keeper.
2. Game time starts when the first pitch of the game is thrown.
3. An inning starts when the first pitch of the inning is thrown.
4. Games will begin at 5:30 PM or later (if agreed to by both coaches) on weekdays with the field available 30 minutes prior to the start time for team warm-ups.

**There will be a 5 run maximum in each inning except for the last inning which the following will apply:**

- No run limit for the last inning.
- If a visiting team is behind by more than 5 runs in the last inning, that team has the ability to score unlimited runs, and not be subjected to the 5 run limit.
- If there is a difference of more than 5 runs at the bottom of the last inning, the home team is limited to as many runs as it takes to win the game.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> run of the inning (except the last inning) can only be scored on a hit ball or a walk/hit-batter forcing a runner home. It cannot be scored by stealing or by passed ball. (2024)
- **To align with tournament rules: should a game enter extra innings within the time limit, at the start of each extra inning, a runner is placed on second base. The runner will be the last**

**recorded batted out of the previous inning. A substitute runner may be used in accordance with substitution rules. (NEW 2025)**

5. Valid scorebook keeping must be done for every game. Home team keeps the official scorebook.

6. Except for the pitching position, open substitutions are allowed for all positions. Babe Ruth Softball rules are to be followed for pitching substitutions. Refer to the "RE-ENTRY RULE AND EXPLANATION" section and Rule 3.05 of the BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC. SOFTBALL

7. Home coaches shall notify visiting team coaches as early as possible when canceling games due to inclement weather.

8. For called off games, the home team in collaboration with that town's recreation director are responsible for rescheduling the game and contacting other coaches/directors.

9. For games played in wet conditions, the home team should have a good supply of dry balls and towels, and should provide the pitcher with a dry ball as often as necessary.

### **C. Equipment & Clothing**

1. Helmets with face shield or cage must be worn to bat and run the bases and must remain on the player's head until she is off the field.

2. Face Masks are **REQUIRED** for the infield positions of **First base, Third base and Pitcher**. Each team should supply enough masks for all infield positions, should others choose to wear them.

3. Catcher must wear full gear including helmet with full face mask.

4. Most towns will provide a t-shirt and hat for the players. All other uniforms items are the player's responsibilities, including softball gloves.

5. Long Pants are strongly recommended for all games and practices to avoid serious cuts and bruises. For safety reasons, it is suggested that players wear some type of athletic wear and comfortable athletic shoes. Cleats are recommended but not required. No sandals. Hats or visors must be worn in a forward manner. No jewelry.

6. All teams will use **12" softballs**. Home team will provide game balls. Other team equipment (bats, balls, helmets) will be provided by the Town's recreation department.

### **D. Pitching:**

**Please refer to the BABE RUTH LEAGUE INC. SOFTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL RULE book (Section 8.00) for all pitching rules including: P7.**

1. Limitations: "In the 12U and younger, a pitcher regardless of age, may pitch in no more than 10 innings per calendar week."

2. Pitchers must have both feet touching the pitching rubber before each pitch. Only one step forward will be allowed.

3. The pitcher will be allowed 3 warm-up pitches from the mound at the beginning of each inning and when a new pitcher is brought into the game. A pitcher may warm-up on the sidelines in preparation for pitching in the game.

4. A pitcher that is wild should be removed by his coach if the coach feels that the pitcher is putting batters in danger. If a coach does not remove his pitcher that the plate umpire feels is putting batters in danger, the plate umpire may remove the pitcher from his position. If the plate umpire does not initiate removal, either coach can request that the umpire remove the pitcher.

5. The pitching distance will be **35-40 feet**. "In the 12U division, a league may elect to pitch from 35 feet. If a league uses this option, it is recommended that the pitching distance be gradually increased through the season as pitchers develop. Pitching distance for 12U tournament competition is 40 feet." Babe Ruth 2013 p. 49

### **E. Fielding, Batting & Running:**

1. Batting line-ups will consist of all players (everyone bats).

2. A maximum of 9 players will be allowed on the field. Each player is required to play at least 6 outs in the field for all games. Teams may play with only 8 players in the field if necessary.

3. All runners must return to their bases when the catcher is in the catcher's box and the pitcher has the ball and is inside of the pitcher's circle. (For regular season games the cat-mouse game at any base is not encouraged. This slows the speed of play.)

4. Base runners shall not leave their bases until the pitcher releases the ball. For violation the runner will be called out.

5. Bats should be dropped or placed on the ground as the runner begins to run. If a player does not, and instead throws the bat, then it is recommended that on the first offense a warning be issued by the umpire. If it occurs a second time, by the same player, the umpire can remove the player from the batting lineup without penalizing the team. The batting lineup will skip over the offending player without penalty. The player can remain playing the field.

6. For regular and post season play the **"dropped third strike rule" is in effect** for the Major division.

7. Runners may only advance one base on any "overthrown" balls.

8. When a runner is attempting to "steal" home, whether or not on a passed ball, the batter must clear out of the batter's box (and out of the way of the catcher/pitcher attempting to make a play on the runner). If the batter does not back out of the batter's box and/or interferes with the play, the umpire may call the batter "out" and make all runners return to the base they previously occupied.

**9. A COURTESY RUNNER – The pitcher and catcher may have a courtesy runner every time they reach base. The courtesy runner can be any player who is currently not in the lineup. Courtesy running does not count toward the substitution count of either player. (NEW 2025)**

### **F. Conduct:**

1. Spectators, coaches and players are expected to set an exemplary standard of behavior with the best interest of the players in mind. Good sportsmanship conduct will be expected at all times. No spectators will be allowed behind the backstop or in the dugout areas while the game is being played.

2. No coach or spectator will use any tobacco products on or near the playing field during practices or games. No alcoholic beverages will be allowed on or near any playing premises.

3. The use of qualified umpires behind the plate is highly recommended.