



8U RULES

2012 SEASON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	2
8U Play Time Guidelines	3
Defensive Teammate	3
Offensive Teammate	3
Individual Achiever	4
Frequently Asked Questions	4
Official Softball Playing Rules — 8U	5
Pitching Rules.....	5
First-Half Pitching Rules	5
Second-Half Pitching Rules:.....	6
Appeal Play	7
Batter	7
Bunting	7
Catcher.....	7
Defensive Coaches	7
Defensive Positions	8
Defensive Play Requirements	8
Example Defensive Line-Ups.....	8
Field Manager.....	10
Hit Batter	10
Live Ball.....	10
Making a Play.....	10
Obstruction	11
Offensive Play Time Requirements	11
Example Offensive Line-Ups	11
Outfield.....	12
Pitching Eligibility	12
player-pitcher.....	12
Reentry	12
Regulation Game.....	12
Three-Run Rule.....	13
Time Limits.....	13
Sliding	13
Stealing.....	13
Strike Zone	13

8U PLAY TIME GUIDELINES

The playing time requirements are in place to ensure that the objective of “winning softball games” does not interfere with or supersede the larger goals as defined in the bylaws:

- A. To promote girls’ recreational sports in order to satisfy a need in our community.
- B. To teach basic skills and fundamentals of softball through qualified adult supervision.
- C. To promote physical, mental, social, and moral development in girls of the ages 5-16.
- D. To provide an atmosphere of friendly competition and teamwork.
- E. To develop attitudes of good sportsmanship, discipline and integrity through team play.

The playing time requirements should be considered minimum guidelines. The real desire is that each girl will be treated respectfully and fairly — that each girl will be given the opportunity to develop her skills and that no girl will be “written off,” i.e., relegated to a minor role due to a perceived lack of skill or ability. This philosophy holds true for the entire MV-LA Girls Softball League at all divisions.

Softball is unique among girls’ sports in that it offers players three distinct roles during each game. Each of these roles supports the objectives that we have defined in the charter of the League. These three roles are:

- Defensive Teammate
- Offensive Teammate, and
- Individual Achiever.

DEFENSIVE TEAMMATE

The success of any team requires each of the players to fulfill her particular position on the field and all to work together (Teamwork) to fulfill the defensive objective.

Supporting each other on the field builds the bonds of trust required of a true “team.”

What you can do: Allow each player to feel that she is a part of this team. Girls who are consistently relegated to the outfield quite clearly receive the message that not only are they not “the star,” they are not even wanted in the inner circle. Here’s an easy demonstration: While watching a game, take a look at the parents on the sideline.

Where is the focus and attention? It’s where the action is – on the pitcher, on the batter, in the infield. If you wonder why girls are out catching butterflies or doing cartwheels in left field, it’s because they do not feel like they are part of the game.

OFFENSIVE TEAMMATE

The time spent in the dugout (or, at 8U, on the sideline) is an opportunity for girls to be social, cheer, and support their teammate who is at bat or on base. This is a very

8U Play Time Guidelines

important time for both the Individual Achiever to feel supported and for the girls to recognize the value of each player on the team.

What you can do: Use this time to direct girls in positive cheers and keep them focused on the game. Don't let them wander around getting random snacks from parents or playing with their dog.

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVER

The opportunity to be at bat, one player versus nine or ten girls who would like to get her out, is generally the biggest thrill for most players. Her teammates are cheering her, Mom and Dad are holding their breath hoping little Suzie will get her first hit, and little Suzie knows that it is all up to her.

What you can do: Give all your Individual Achievers the opportunity to shine. The more times a girl gets up to bat, the more comfortable she will feel in this role, and the more likely she will get that hit. Girls who are consistently placed at or near the bottom of the batting order will have much less interest and show much less improvement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q – I have a girl on my team that is such a poor player that it would be dangerous to play her in the infield. What do I do?

A – It is the philosophy of the League to develop players and allow them the opportunity to play positions they would like to try. The League encourage all team staffs to make sure that team assignments reflect an attempt to provide each girl with the most opportunities for fun and learning the game of softball. If a player is denied an opportunity to play a position because the Staff feels the Player would be harmed by playing that position, they should contact the Player Agent with their concern and the Board will help the staff come up with a practice plan to ensure that the girl will have some opportunity to play the position she would like to try to play.

Q – Should I let players who don't always come to practice have the minimum playing time?

A – Yes.

Q – If I don't always field my best players on the infield or put my best batters up early in the line-up won't I be at a disadvantage?

A – No. All teams will follow the same rules so you are playing on an even playing field with respect to competition. What you will be achieving however, is giving ALL girls an opportunity to enjoy the game of softball. The most important thing that you can teach a girl at 8U is the love of the game, and your measure as a coach is not your win/loss record but how many girls from your team return next season.

OFFICIAL SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES – 8U

The 8U Division of the Mountain View-Los Altos Girls Softball league uses the same rules as the 10U Division with the exceptions listed in this set of rules.

PITCHING RULES

In prior seasons, we have observed that many batters were reluctant to swing at pitches pitched by the player-pitcher (and potentially strike out), hoping that the player-pitcher would pitch four balls which resulted in a Staff-Pitcher coming into the game to pitch — presumably pitching pitches that would be easier for the batter to hit. This tendency had two negative outcomes:

- batters rarely took the opportunity to swing and get used to hitting off a player-pitcher, and
- each inning took longer than it should have due the time elapsed as each batter looked at four balls delivered by the Pitcher plus the added time for a Staff-Pitcher to enter the game and pitch up to another four pitches before the at-bat was completed, resulting in fewer at-bats per game for all participants.

We would like to encourage batters to swing at pitches delivered by the Pitcher as well as decrease the average number of pitches each batter typically receives for each at-bat. At the same time, we want to reward Pitchers for pitching strikes. To attain these objectives, we have instituted rules for the first half of the 8U season and are deemed “First-Half Pitching Rules”. At a designated date midway through the season, we will transition to the “Second-Half Pitching Rules.” This date is typically around the end of April, when the 8U teams begin playing mid-week games.

NOTE: Please check the League Calendar at www.mvlags.org for the change-over date to Second-Half Pitching rules.

The First-Half Pitching Rules and Second-Half Pitching Rules are noted below.

FIRST-HALF PITCHING RULES

- A. No strike outs and no walks.
- B. Pitcher pitches a maximum of three pitches per hitter. Umpire calls strikes as normal.
- C. After three pitches that have not been put into play by the batter, the Staff-Pitcher¹ from the batter’s team comes in to pitch. The number of pitches the Staff-Pitcher is allowed to pitch equals four minus the number of strikes on the batter.

Example 1: If the Pitcher pitched three strikes to the batter, then the Staff-Pitcher is allowed one pitch to the batter. If the batter does not put that pitch into play fairly, the batter is out.

¹ Staff-Pitcher: An official registered staff member (manager, coach, assistant coach, or chaperone). Any reference to Pitcher implies the player-pitcher.

Example 2: If the Pitcher pitched three balls to the batter, then the Staff-Pitcher is allowed a maximum of four pitches to the batter. The umpire will not call balls or strikes when the Staff-Pitcher is pitching.

- D. While the Pitcher must pitch from the designated pitcher's plate, the Staff-Pitcher is allowed to pitch from any distance he or she chooses as long as it is in line with the pitcher's plate and home plate and is within the "pitching circle." The Staff-Pitcher must use common sense so as to not get so close to the batter that they become at risk to injury from a "lucky" hit that hits the Staff-Pitcher at close range. The Pitcher will stand approximately even and to the left or right of the pitching plate inside the pitching circle until the pitch is released.
- E. When a staff member leaves the coaches' box to pitch to the batter, the manager, chaperone, or a helmeted player will immediately replace the base coach at the base which has been vacated by the staff member becoming the Staff-Pitcher.

NOTE: In order to minimize delay it is preferred that the staff member who is closest to his or her team's side of the field become the Staff-Pitcher.

SECOND-HALF PITCHING RULES:

- A. Batters may strike out, but batters may not walk.
- B. Pitcher pitches to batter until:
 - 1. the ball is put into play by the batter.
 - 2. the batter strikes out.
 - 3. the Pitcher pitches four balls, in which case the Staff-Pitcher comes in to pitch.
- C. After a batter has reached a four-ball count, the Staff-Pitcher from the batter's team will pitch to a player of that same team when the player is a batter who has reached a ball four count. When the Staff-Pitcher enters the game, the batter will retain her strike count, but the ball count will be reset to "no balls." The Staff-Pitcher will pitch to the batter until:
 - 1. The ball is put into play by the batter.
 - 2. If the batter reaches ball four a second time, the batter is out.
 - 3. The batter strikes out. The umpire will call balls and strikes with the count being no balls and the number of strikes that were on the batter when the Staff-Pitcher entered the game. The umpire is instructed to call a strike on a pitch that is in the strike zone even if the batter does not swing.
- D. While the Pitcher must pitch from the designated pitcher's plate, the Staff-Pitcher is allowed to pitch from any distance he or she chooses as long as it is in line with the pitcher's plate and home plate and is within the "pitching circle." The Staff-Pitcher must use common sense so as to not get so close to the batter that they become at risk to injury from a "lucky" hit that hits the Staff-Pitcher at close range. The Pitcher will stand approximately even and to the left or right of the pitching plate inside the pitching circle until the pitch is released.
- E. When a staff member leaves the coaches' box to pitch to the batter, the manager, chaperone, or a helmeted player will immediately replace the base coach at the base which has been vacated by the staff member becoming the Staff-Pitcher.

NOTE: In order to minimize delay it is preferred that the staff member who is closest to his or her team's side of the field become the Staff-Pitcher.

APPEAL PLAY

There is no "appeal" in the 8U Division. In the 8U Division, any runner failing to touch a base may be immediately called "out" by the umpire. The umpire must see the play and cannot be informed by anyone else that the base was not touched.

EFFECT: If the umpire is informed by anyone on the opposing team that a player failed to touch a base and the umpire was not a witness to this, the player will then be considered to have touched the base.

EXCEPTION — Player Appeal of Runner failing to touch home plate: If the Umpire witnesses the runner failing to tag home plate, the umpire shall not call the runner "Out." If a defensive player in possession of the ball tags home plate and informs the Umpire that the runner missed home plate before the runner returns to tag the plate, the runner will be called out.

BATTER

The batter shall take her position in the batter's box promptly when it is her time at bat. After the pitcher comes to Set Position, the batter may not leave her position in the batter's box.

EFFECT: Once the batter has taken her position in the batter's box, the batter shall not be permitted to step out of the batter's box, unless there is a delay in the game action or, in the judgment of the plate umpire, conditions warrant an exception.

BUNTING

- A. Bunting is allowed when executed while a player-pitcher is pitching.
- B. Bunting is not allowed when the Staff-Pitcher is pitching.

CATCHER

The catcher is a fielder whose position will be behind home plate within the catcher's box and will receive all pitches from the pitcher. In the 8U Division, a team staff member or other adult will back up their team catcher on pitched balls ("Staff-Catcher"). If the catcher should miss a pitched ball, the Staff-Catcher or other adult will field the ball and return it safely to the player-catcher. The Staff-Catcher or other adult shall not verbally address nor give any physical directions to the team. The Staff-Catcher or other adult may only address the player-catcher.

EFFECT: To speed up the action of the game the player-catcher does not have to chase errant pitches.

DEFENSIVE COACHES

A team may position a coach in the outfield while their team is on defense. The coach must be positioned behind the outfielders and may not interfere with an active play. The intent of this is to provide guidance to the outfield players during the inning while the ball is not in play.

DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

- A. A team must have a minimum of seven players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game.

NOTE: Should a team have fewer than seven players, they should borrow players from the opposing team to play or continue the game.

- B. A team shall consist of players in the following positions: pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base (F3), second base (F4), third base (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left-center fielder (F8), right-center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10).
- C. Outfielders must be no closer than the edge of the grass or, for all-grass fields, at least three feet behind the baseline.

DEFENSIVE PLAY REQUIREMENTS

The playing time rules were developed to give all girls in the league an opportunity to participate fully in the game of softball.

- A. No player may play Pitcher and/or Catcher (combined) for more than 2 innings in a 4-inning game, or 3 innings in a 5-inning game. No player may play Catcher in Consecutive innings.

PURPOSE: Developing Pitchers and Catchers at 8U enhances the softball experience for all league players as they progress to higher divisions.

- B. All players must play at least 3 defensive innings in any game where the team has 4 or more defensive innings.

PURPOSE: To meet the objectives of the Recreational League, All Girls Play.

EXCEPTION: A Player who plays Pitcher and/or Catcher for two innings in a game may be allowed to play only two defensive innings in that game.

- C. All Players must play at least one inning in the infield each game.

PURPOSE: To meet the objectives of the Recreation League, All Girls Play.

NOTE: At the 8U level the majority of the playing experience takes place in the infield. Girls who play a majority of their defensive positions in the outfield do not receive the same softball experience as those who play a majority of their positions in the infield.

It is the experience of past 8U Managers and Coaches that it is much easier to follow the Defensive Play Requirement rules by having a Defensive Roster. In order to facilitate quick placement of girls into their defensive positions (and thus keep the game pace quick), the Manager (or assigned Coach) shall complete a Defensive Roster prior to the game showing the players name, number, and position for each inning. A copy of this Defensive Roster will be given to the opposing team's scorekeeper or other staff person prior to the beginning of the game.

EXAMPLE DEFENSIVE LINE-UPS

- A. Example 1: In this example, each girl plays three innings (except Gina, who plays four). Note that the names of the players should be in the upper area of the box. This will facilitate writing in a new player to fill an unexpected vacancy left by a missing player on game day.

Position	Inning 1	Inning 2	Inning 3	Inning 4
Pitcher	Abby (1)	Kay (6)	Abby (1)	Kay (6)
Catcher	Betty (3)	Linda (8)	Betty (3)	Linda (8)
1st Base	Cathy (5)	Gina (13)	Mary (10)	Cathy (5)
2nd Base	Diane (7)	Harriet (12)	Harriet (12)	Diane (7)
3rd Base	Erin (9)	Irene (2)	Irene (2)	Erin (9)
SS	Faith (11)	Joy (4)	Joy (4)	Faith (11)
Left Field	Gina (13)	Mary (10)	Kay (6)	Mary (10)
Left Center	Harriet (12)	Cathy (5)	Linda (8)	Betty (3)
Right Center	Irene (2)	Diane (7)	Faith (11)	Abby (1)
Right Field	Joy (4)	Erin (9)	Gina (13)	Gina (13)
Bench	Kay (6)	Abby (1)	Cathy (5)	Harriet (12)
Bench	Linda (8)	Betty (3)	Diane (7)	Irene (2)
Bench	Mary (10)	Faith (11)	Erin (9)	Joy (4)

B. Example 2: In the example below, Erin did not show up:

Position	Inning 1	Inning 2	Inning 3	Inning 4
Pitcher	Abby (1)	Kay (6)	Abby (1)	Kay (6)
Catcher	Betty (3)	Linda (8)	Betty (3)	Linda (8)
1st Base	Cathy (5)	Gina (13)	Mary (10)	Cathy (5)
2nd Base	Diane (7)	Harriet (12)	Harriet (12)	Diane (7)
3rd Base	Erin (9) Kay (6)	Irene (2)	Irene (2)	Erin (9) Harriet (12)
SS	Faith (11)	Joy (4)	Joy (4)	Faith (11)
Left Field	Gina (13)	Mary (10)	Kay (6)	Mary (10)
Left Center	Harriet (12)	Cathy (5)	Linda (8)	Betty (3)
Right Center	Irene (2)	Diane (7)	Faith (11)	Abby (1)
Right Field	Joy (4)	Erin (9) Abby (1)	Gina (13)	Gina (13)
Bench	Kay (6)	Abby (1)	Cathy (5)	Harriet (12)
Bench	Linda (8)	Betty (3)	Diane (7)	Irene (2)
Bench	Mary (10)	Faith (11)	Erin (9)	Joy (4)

FIELD MANAGER

A Field Manager is a uniformed coach, assistant coach, manager, or chaperone appointed by the female team Manager to represent her during the game in directing the team on defense. This Field Manager may request "Time" and visit the defense. Only one staff member, the Field Manager, is allowed on the playing field at a time, except to render first aid.

HIT BATTER

- A. Standard Rule: When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered a part of the bat.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, and the batter is entitled to first base without liability.

8U Rule: When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike makes solid contact with the batter. If a batter is hit by a pitch the batting team's Manager can decide if the batter is to be awarded first base.

EFFECT: A batter should only be awarded first base if, in the determination of her Manager, continuing her at bat would cause her distress.

- B. Bounced Ball: If a bounced pitch touches the batter, the batter shall not be awarded first base.

NOTE: If the batter hits such a bounced pitch, the result of the hit shall be the same as if the batter hit the ball in flight.

LIVE BALL

After the umpire calls "Play Ball," the ball is live and will remain in play until, for legal cause, or at the umpire's call of "Time" suspending play, the ball becomes "Dead" and all play will stop at that instant.

While the ball is "Dead", no player can be put "Out", no bases can be run, and no runs can score, except that runners may advance or retreat one or more bases as the result of acts which occurred while the ball was "Live" (such as, but not limited to an overthrow, Interference, or a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field).

MAKING A PLAY

"Making a Play" is the act of throwing the ball to another defensive player in an attempt to put a runner or batter-runner out. The ball will be considered dead and no runner may advance further in the following circumstances:

- A. When making a play, an infielder throws the ball past the intended recipient.
B. On a ball hit into the outfield when the ball is then returned to the infield.

EFFECT: When the ball passes the imaginary line between the bases, if a runner is not more than half-way to a base, the runner must return to the last base achieved.

- C. On any hit ball that does not leave the infield a runner or batter-runner may only advance one base.

OBSTRUCTION

In the case of Obstruction, a runner will be called safe without ever having to touch a base or home plate.

OFFENSIVE PLAY TIME REQUIREMENTS

The playing time rules were developed to give all girls in your league an opportunity to participate fully in the game of softball.

Players on teams with 12 or fewer players will be placed in one of the first four positions of the batting order in at least every three games. Players on teams with 13 or more players will bat in one of the top four positions in at least every four games.

PURPOSE: The purpose for this rule is similar to the defensive infield/outfield rule. Players who are consistently placed at or near the bottom of the batting order have much less opportunity to be the Individual Achiever. Learning to be an effective offensive player requires not only batting practice but “at-bats” during game situations.

EXAMPLE OFFENSIVE LINE-UPS

A. Example 1: Sample offensive line-up for 13-player teams

Position	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5
1st	Abby (1)	Abby (1)	Faith (11)	Erin (9)	Abby (1)
2nd	Betty (3)	Betty (3)	Gina (13)	Abby (1)	Betty (3)
3rd	Cathy (5)	Cathy (5)	Harriet (12)	Betty (3)	Cathy (5)
4th	Diane (7)	Diane (7)	Irene (2)	Cathy (5)	Diane (7)
5th	Erin (9)	Erin (9)	Joy (4)	Diane (7)	Erin (9)
6th	Faith (11)	Faith (11)	Kay (6)	Faith (11)	Faith (11)
7th	Gina (13)	Gina (13)	Linda (8)	Gina (13)	Gina (13)
8th	Harriet (12)	Harriet (12)	Mary (10)	Harriet (12)	Harriet (12)
9th	Irene (2)	Irene (2)	Abby (1)	Irene (2)	Irene (2)
10th	Joy (4)	Joy (4)	Betty (3)	Joy (4)	Joy (4)
11th	Kay (6)	Kay (6)	Cathy (5)	Kay (6)	Kay (6)
12th	Linda (8)	Linda (8)	Diane (7)	Linda (8)	Linda (8)
13th	Mary (10)	Mary (10)	Erin (9)	Mary (10)	Mary (10)

Official Softball Playing Rules — 8U

B. Example 2: Sample offensive line-up for 12 player teams

Position	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4
1st	Abby (1)	Irene (2)	Erin (9)	Abby (1)
2nd	Betty (3)	Joy (4)	Faith (11)	Betty (3)
3rd	Cathy (5)	Kay (6)	Gina (13)	Cathy (5)
4th	Diane (7)	Linda (8)	Harriet (12)	Diane (7)
5th	Erin (9)	Abby (1)	Irene (2)	Erin (9)
6th	Faith (11)	Betty (3)	Joy (4)	Faith (11)
7th	Gina (13)	Cathy (5)	Kay (6)	Gina (13)
8th	Harriet (12)	Diane (7)	Linda (8)	Harriet (12)
9th	Irene (2)	Erin (9)	Abby (1)	Irene (2)
10th	Joy (4)	Faith (11)	Betty (3)	Joy (4)
11th	Kay (6)	Gina (13)	Cathy (5)	Kay (6)
12th	Linda (8)	Harriet (12)	Diane (7)	Linda (8)

OUTFIELD

The portion of fair territory beyond the base path area and extending to the boundaries of the grounds of the field. Outfielders must be at least three feet beyond the baseline when the ball is pitched, or, in the case of a skinned infield, no closer than the edge of the grass.

PITCHING ELIGIBILITY

All girls are eligible to pitch. In the 8U Division a girl may pitch six outs per game.

PLAYER-PITCHER

The girl who shall from the pitcher's plate deliver the ball to the batter.

REENTRY

Girls may enter or reenter at any point in the game so long as the Defensive Play Requirements are met.

REGULATION GAME

A regulation game consists of four (4) innings in 8U Division, or if shortened:

- A. because the home team needs none of its half of the last inning or only a fraction of it, or
- B. because the umpire calls the game.

THREE-RUN RULE

8U games are played under a three runs per inning rule for the first three innings. Under this rule, an inning will end when:

- A. the defense makes the third out, or
- B. the offense scores the a third run in their half of the inning.

EFFECT: This rule limits each 8U team to scoring a maximum of three runs in their half of the inning for innings one), two, and three.

NOTE: Runs forced in during the play which results in the third run being scored do not count as part of the score.

NOTE: Please keep in mind that it is the goal of the League to ensure both teams have fun in a game. If one team is far ahead in an unlimited inning, the sportsmanlike thing for the offensive coach to do would be to end their half-inning so that the other team gets a chance to play. Continuing to bat through the order multiple times in an inning invariably does not yield a fun experience for both teams.

TIME LIMITS

8U Division games are played under a ninety minute playing time limit, which allows four or more innings to be played.

- A. The umpire will be responsible for keeping the game time
- B. The game time reflects the actual playing time of the game, and excludes "Time Outs" granted by the umpire that are longer than one minute.
- C. No inning will be started after the umpires judge that the ninety minute playing time limit has been reached.

SLIDING

There is no intentional sliding at the 8U level. The result of an intentional slide shall be that the player will be called out.

STEALING

The base runner may not leave the base until after a pitched ball has made contact with the bat, therefore there is no stealing. Upon the first instance of a runner leaving a base prior to the ball making contact with the bat a no pitch shall be declared and the umpire will issue a warning to the team staff. Any subsequent runner from that team will be called out for leaving a base prior to the ball making contact with the bat and a no pitch shall be declared.

STRIKE ZONE

The strike zone is the space over any part of home plate, when a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate which is between the batter's shoulders and the bottom of the knees.

However, due to the fact that players at this age are just learning to pitch, umpires are instructed to be generous in their interpretation of the strike zone — in other words,

anything hittable anywhere near the strike zone will be called a strike. Otherwise, there will be a lot of standing around waiting for the coach-pitcher to be called in to pitch.