

Youth Softball Rules

Age Requirements:

A player's age as of January 1st the current year will determine the age group they participate in:

T-Ball League: ages 4-5

Machine Pitch League: ages 6-8

Coach Assistant League: ages 9-11

Senior League: ages 12- 15

Purpose:

The purpose of the Ayden Youth Softball Program is to provide a wholesome recreational activity for girls ages 4-15 that will help them to build self-esteem and teach them the basic fundamentals of softball.

The program is designed for the following purpose:

- To help players learn the basic skills of softball.
- To help players develop self-discipline and build positive attributes such as teamwork, respect for authority and good sportsmanship.

Rosters and Registration:

- All players will be entered into the draft every year.
- The draft will take place following the registration period. A second draft may occur to fill remaining roster spots.
- Draft order will be determined by picking numbers out of a hat.
- For other Draft rules see Youth Sport Manual

Fields Rules and Sportsmanship:

- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on recreation property. This is a state law. If necessary, proper legal action will be taken to enforce this rule.
- A coach, player, or spectator with alcohol on their breath will be asked to leave the recreation area.
- No tobacco products—smoking, chewing, dipping, etc. are allowed on the field or spectator area.
- No profanity
- No negative cheering
- Children not participating must be under supervision by a parent/adult at all times. No children may be unattended at any time in any facility.

General Players Rule:

- No jewelry, watches or any accessory of hard materials may be worn during games.
- Players must wear their team shirt for all games.
- Shoes - Tennis shoes or molded sole shoes with multiple cleats are acceptable.
 - Cleats: Molded multiple cleats, studs or bars less than ½ inch in diameter or width that does not extend more than ½ of an inch from the sole and are not of an extreme conical design is permissible. Detachable fiberglass or steel-tipped cleats are not legal
- Catchers-Catchers must wear a mask, hockey style helmet, check protector, and shin guards furnished by the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department.
- Facemask- All players are encouraged to wear protective face mask will playing defense.

- Helmets: Batting helmets with face guards required for all batters.

General League Rules

Ayden Arts and Recreation Department will utilize the National Federation of High School rules except as modified within:

- **DUG OUTS**: Teams must clean the dug out before exiting after a game or practice
- **MINIMUM NUMBER OF STARTERS**: A team must begin the game with six players. (Failure to comply—Forfeit).
Note: One or No Outfielders: If the ball goes to the outfield and there is one or less outfielders, the batter can only advance as far as second base at their own risk. All other base runners will be allowed to advance up to two bases at their own risk.
- **GRACE PERIOD**: 10 minute grace period for the 1st game of the night. There will be no grace time allowed for any games other than the 1st game.
- **OUTFIELD**: A team may play with up to 4 outfielders. Outfielders must play on the grass. If the ball goes under the outfield fence, the outfielder should raise her hands in the air immediately to notify the official.
- **PARTICIPATION RULE**: We will play free substitution on defense. Players can be switched and rotated on or off the field each inning. No player will be allowed to sit the bench two innings in a row. If they sit two innings in a row, that player will be allowed to play every inning of the next game.
- **BATTING LINE-UP**: A team will bat the entire line-up. 1-12
- **TIE BREAKER**: If the game expires and the score is tied, the international tie breaker will be used. International Tie Breaker: Both the home and the visiting team will start each inning with the last batted out on second base. If the score is still tied after 2 innings of play, the home and visiting team will start each inning with the last 2 batted outs on second and third base.
- **TIMEOUTS**: Coaches are allowed 4 times outs per regulation game. 1 time out per inning will be issued in extra innings.
- **COACH**: Three coaches per team will be allowed in the dugout.
- **TOURNAMENT**: The tournament will be held directly after the regular season. Tournament brackets will depend on the number of teams participating. All regular season rules will apply to the tournament. Tournament will be single elimination unless otherwise stated. Seating for the tournament will be determined by the regular season standings. If two teams have the same season recorded head to head play will determine the seeds. If head to head play is equal, then a flip coin will determine the seeds. (except T-Ball no tournament)

Division Rules

PITCHING MACHINE LEAGUE

6-8 years old: This league is to teach the fundamentals, skills, and team building.

Games will consist of 5 innings or 50 minutes (finish the inning).

- A half inning will consist of 3 outs or 5 runs.
- 11inch Softball will be used, provided by the Recreation Department.
- The pitching machine will be set up at a distance of 35 feet from home plate. The speed will be set between 34-36 mph.
- Offense
 - Batter: Each batter will get 5 pitches to hit the ball. After 5 unsuccessful attempts to hit the ball the batter will be out. A foul ball will not count as a last strike.
 - If the ball is batted and hits the pitching machine, it will be ruled a single and all force runners will advance one base.
 - **Over Throws at any Base:** If there is a missed ball/overthrow at any base, runners may advance one base (at their own risk).
 - Stealing: There will be no stealing in this league. Runners can only advance to the next base when the ball is hit. Runners are allowed to take a lead off the base when the ball crosses the plate.
 - Dropped Third Strike Rule: Batters may not advance to first base on a dropped strike.
 - Offensive Coaches: Offensive coaches MUST stay in the coaches' boxes located by first and third base.
- Defensive
 - Pitcher: A defensive player will be allowed to play in the pitching circle.
 - The play will be ruled dead and "times" will be call when the ball is returned to the pitching circle OR the lead runner is no longer trying to advance to the next base.
 - Returning the ball to the Pitcher: The ball/play will be ruled dead when the ball is thrown back to the pitcher circle. The pitcher does not have to successfully catch the ball but she must be inside the circle for the ball/play to the ruled dead. If the base runners are more than half way when the ball is ruled dead, the official will allowed them to go to the next base. If the baserunners are less than half way when the ball is ruled dead, the official will have the runners go back to the previous base.
NOTE :Always encourage your base runners to run to the next base. The official will tell them if they need to go back to the previous base.
 - Defensive Coach: One defensive coach will be allowed on the field while his/her team is on defense. The coach must stand and remain behind 2nd base and not interfere with the offense in any way. If the defensive coach interferes with the play, the batter will be ruled safe and all runners will advance to the next base.
 - Infield Fly: No Infield fly rule.

Tournament rules:

- **Play-Off /Tournament Games:** The team that is trailing may play offense until tie or three outs, which

COACH ASSIST LEAGUE

9-11 years old: This league develops gross motor skill fundamentals and competitive play.

Game Rules:

- Game will consist of 5 innings or 1:05 mins (finish the inning)
- A half inning will consist of 3 outs or 5 runs, which ever come first. .
- 11inch Softball will be used, provided by the Recreation Department.
- Offense
 - Bunting will not be allowed when the coach is pitching. Any attempt to bunt with the coach pitching will result in a strike.
 - **Over Throws at any Base:** If there is a missed ball/overthrow at any base, runners may advance one base (at their own risk).
 - Stealing: **Runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitchers hand.** Stealing will not be allowed when the coach is on the field. Base runners may only steal one base per pitch/play. This includes the actual pitch from the pitcher to the catcher as well as the throw back from the catcher to the pitcher/or any baseman.
Stealing is defined by: Advancing to the next base when the ball has not been hit or bunted by the batter. Base runners may advance as many bases as possible on a batted ball.
 - Dropped Third Strike Rule: Batters may *not* advance to first base on a dropped third strike. The ball is not dead and base runners may advance at their own risk.
- Defensive
 - Pitching: Pitchers will pitch from 35 feet. If the pitcher hits the batter with the ball, the batter will be awarded first base. 3 strikes will be an out. 4 balls will prompt the offensive team's coach to come on the field and throw the rest of the strike count to the batter.
 - Coach Assist: The coach may stand 20-35 feet from home plate when pitching to the batters. The offensive coach on the field may not interfere with the defense during a play. If there is interference, the play will be ruled dead and the batter will be out.
Coaches will only be allowed to throw one "ball" per strike.
 - 4 Balls / 0 Strikes = coach has 6 pitches to throw 3 strikes to the batter
 - 4 Balls / 1 Strike = coach has 4 pitches to throw 2 strikes to the batter
 - 4 Balls / 2 Strikes = coach has 2 pitches to throw 1 strike to the batterNOTE: Any pitch that is in the strike zone will be called a strike regardless if the batter swings.
 - Infield Fly: No Infield fly rule.

Tournament rules:

- **Play-Off /Tournament Games:** The team that is trailing may play offense until tie or three outs, which ever come first.

SENIOR LEAGUE

12-15 years old: This league reinforces the fundamentals and gross motor skills in a competitive environment putting emphasis on sportsmanship.

Game Rules:

- . Game will consist of 5 innings or 1:20 minutes (finish the inning)
- A half inning will consist of 3 outs or 5 runs, which ever come first.
- 12inch Softball will be used, provided by the Recreation Department.
- Offense
 - Pitching: Pitchers will pitch from 40 feet
 - Pitching Changes: Pitchers can be changed during a game at any time and reentered as needed. No limit.
 - Stealing: Runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitchers hand.

Tournament rules:

- Play-Off /Tournament Games: The team that is trailing may play offense until a tie or three outs, which ever come first.

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