

## PSAA 3-PITCH SOFTBALL RULES

1. Games are scheduled for 40 minute time slots. If we average 10 minutes per inning, we will have a 4 inning game. Therefore, our target is to have a game consist of at least 3 innings and a maximum of 5 innings. IF a game is tied after 5 innings and there is at least 5 minutes left one extra inning can be played – but this inning will begin with each team starting with one out and the batter listed prior to the batter coming up to the plate is starting at second base. In this instance, a cap of 3 runs per team will be instituted.
2. Ball Size
  - **11 inch softball to be used for U12 teams.**
  - **12 inch softball to be used for U14 teams.**
3. Length of base path
  - **U12 girls – 50 feet      U12 open – 55 feet**
  - **U14 girls – 55 feet      U14 open – 60 feet**
4. There will be a commitment line on third base line that will be set at 25 feet from home plate for all divisions. Once the runner has crossed this line, the runner cannot retreat back to third base. [NOTE: If the base runner needs to retag the base because the ball was caught before it touched the ground and the base runner passed the commitment line, in this situation the runner may return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base to retouch the base.] Runners are not to touch nor run over home plate. Runners are to cross the line drawn from the left corner of the plate that runs to the backstop. The purpose of this line is to prevent runners colliding with catchers fielding a thrown ball at the plate. Runners will be forced out at home plate once they have crossed the commitment line and the defensive player steps on the plate while in possession of the ball. NOTE: there are no tag plays in this force play zone at home. Runners touching the plate or running over the plate will be called out.
5. Safety base at first base – the white base taking the usual fair territory location, the orange base [additional base at first] is located in foul territory. NOTE: the batter-runner must use the base in foul territory when a play is being made to first base on his/her batted ball. Once the player has attained first base, only the inside base [the regular white base that is set-up in fair territory] is the only base in play.  
[Batter runners are entitled to use the regular [white/inside] base at first base if the batter runner is attempting a double, triple, or homerun.]
6. Pitching line [minimum pitching distance] is as follows:
  - **Under 12 - 30 feet** [maximum distance is 35 feet]
  - **Under 14 - 35 feet** [maximum distance is 40 feet]

The pitcher is to be in line between home and second.  
Pitcher may start motion no closer than the minimum pitching line.  
\* all defensive player must be behind the pitching line until ball contact is made with the bat – excluding the catcher [who must also wear a helmet and face mask].
7. Pitch to your own team. Pitch until the batter puts the ball into play to a maximum of 3 pitches. (third pitch foul = out)

8. Pitcher must wear helmet, face-mask, and a glove. NOTE: Helmet and face mask must be baseball approved – ball hockey/floor hockey helmet mask combo **is not acceptable for use.**
9. A batted ball hitting the pitcher is an automatic out - the ball is dead and runners cannot advance – so runner return to the based occupied at the time of the pitch, and the batter is declared out. The call and effect are the same if the pitcher interferes or impedes with the fielding of a batted ball - the batter is called out and all runners will be put back to the base occupied prior to that pitch.
10. Batter must use a full swing, or a strike will be called. Players MAY NOT bunt the ball. [effect: batter will be called out and runners to return to base occupied at time of pitch.] A batted ball does not have to travel a minimum distance to be considered in play.
11. Helmets are mandatory for all batters and base runners. The pitcher and catcher must wear a helmet and face-mask. NOTE: Helmet and face mask must be baseball/softball approved – **cannot use ball hockey/floor hockey helmet and mask combination.**
12. Batters are to stop their swing and then drop their bat. Batters that throw their bat are automatically out – this creates a dead ball situation, which means the runners will be put back to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The Umpire is making the decision regarding whether the bat is thrown or not. NOTE: where the bat comes to rest is not the issue, rather the manner in which it arrived at its resting place.
13. Base-runners should remember the contact rule – Ball hit, may leave the base. Base-runners may leave their base only after the ball has been struck by the bat of the batter. There is NO anticipation step. If the runner comes off the base prior to the ball being struck, the runner is to be declared out.  
Players may slide into second or third base but not at first base, nor home. Players that are going to slide should not be in shorts and should have experience with sliding techniques. It is important that defensive players have the correct footwork around the base to minimize having a player slide into a player's leg.  
[Time should be spent in practice sessions with players to develop the correct footwork around the base to minimize players blocking bases unnecessarily.]  
  
Defenders should be aware that without the ball or being in the act of receiving a ball from a teammate the base-runner has the right of way and should not be blocking a base.  
Base-runners should be aware that they must yield the right of way to a fielder who is in the act of fielding a batted ball.
14. “Out of play ball” - Balls blocked or thrown out of play will result in the umpire awarding one base to each runner [our rule]. Balls caught in play and then carried out of play will result in a dead ball and base-runners being awarded one base [standard rule].
15. Teams may field up to 10 defensive players. Teams may play with an open or limited roster. The open roster means that all players are in the line-up and will all take a turn at bat. Players can be freely moved in and out of defensive positions. The batting order will stay the same throughout the game. You cannot drop players out of the original batting order. [If you start with 14 in your batting order, you need to continue throughout the game with 14. If a player is unable to bat – an out will be registered in place of that player's turn to bat.]  
A limited roster is the traditional direct substitution format. A set number of players are in the batting order and are the only players that can play defensively. A player not in the active line-

up [batting order] can be placed in the line-up in place for another player [substitution]. The player that is replaced is removed from the batting order and cannot take a defensive position. NOTE: Players that are playing defensive positions must be in the batting order. You cannot have a player who only plays defensively while another player bats for that player. As in the previous example, you start with 14 batters in your order and one player is sitting out the start of the game. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning you decide to pinch-hit for a player – the player batting will stay in the line-up in that spot in the batting order while the player that was pinch-hit for is now out of the game.

**COACHES MUST DECLARE PRIOR TO THE GAME WHICH OF THESE TWO FORMATS IS BEING USED. Coaches are to submit their batting order prior to the game to the opposing team's coach [merely submit the player numbers].**

[i.e. 10, 23, 15, ..., 34 – all players listed for open roster or

10, 23, 15, ..., 34 subs: 12, 19 – which indicates that 2 players are not in the active line-up but may be put into the game by taking another player's spot in the active line-up.]

16. 5 run mercy rule per inning ...unlimited runs in the final inning. If an extra inning is being played during the round robin, the cap is 3 runs for each team. NOTE: there is no cap for playoff extra innings play.
17. **NO INFIELD FLY WILL BE CALLED.** There tends to be too much confusion over this rule, so runners will have to watch if the ball is caught or not – and the defensive team will have to make catches to earn an out. This means that at no time will the umpire declare a batter out on a fly ball **UNLESS THE BALL IS CAUGHT.**
18. Only official softball bats may be used. Bats **MUST BE STAMPED** as an Official Softball Bat. [Hardball/Baseball bats will not be allowed.] **THIS IS A COACHES RESPONSIBILITY** – check your team's gear prior to the game and make certain only bats you have approved are used – and these bats meet with our criteria.
19. Tie breaking procedure for playoff seeding: **HEAD TO HEAD WON/LOSS RECORD**
  - HEAD TO HEAD against next seeded team [continue down rankings until tie is broken.]
  - If unable to break tie – go to 5 player inning for each team with a runner starting on second base. [Each team will only get 5 players to bat. If score is tied, go to runner left on base [i.e. score tied 1-1 but team A left runners at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and team B left runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> – team A would win.]
  - THREE WAY TIE:** Head to Head against next seeded team until down to 2 teams tied. Then start with Head to Head won/loss record.

Games that end in a tie and require extra innings will start with a runner [batter listed prior to the batter starting the extra inning] at second base. Each team will have their regular turn at bat. If time is becoming an issue it may be necessary to start the inning with one out so that the teams will technically play two outs instead of three.