

## 2022 8U Division Rules

### I. Introduction:

- a. Timbergrove Sports Mission Statement
  - i. It is the mission of the Timbergrove Sports Association to provide a safe, fun, and competitive community sports environment for young athletes while promoting core principles of sportsmanship, respect, hard work, and volunteerism.
- b. Code of Conduct
  - i. Parent Creed
    - 1. I shall set an example of good sportsmanship and conduct for my child to follow.
    - 2. I shall not criticize or show displeasure with any umpire or their calls unless I am ready to assume their duties.
    - 3. I shall remember that only a certain number of children can play at a time.
    - 4. I shall remember that all managers, coaches, and board members are volunteers.
    - 5. I shall not complain about anyone unless I have labored as much as they have on TSA projects.
  - ii. We expect all spectators to:
    - 1. Let the coaches coach.
    - 2. Let the officials officiate.
    - 3. Let the children play, compete, perform, and learn.
- c. Positive Coaching Alliance
  - i. Timbergrove Sports Association has partnered with PCA in an effort to provide their great resources to our coaches & parents, and because we share their belief that winning is a goal in youth sports but that there is a second, more important goal of using sports to teach life lessons through positive coaching.
  - ii. Coaches are required to attend and complete the Positive Coaching Alliance workshop once every other year. Division Directors and/or the Director of Softball Operations will have records on coaches with active certificates for the PCA workshop.
  - iii. Additional PCA resources for parents and coaches can be found [here](#).

### II. General Rules and Guidelines

- a. Rule Book
  - i. TSA is following the USA/ASA Softball rulebook with some modifications made to fit our playing fields and age groups.
  - ii. Division specific rules are provided in this document and are designed to gradually progress as the athletes age. Any clarification for rules not directly stated herein should be referred to the appropriate Division Directors, Director of Softball Operations, or the current edition of the USA Softball official rulebook.
  - iii. A copy of the Timbergrove Sports Association Softball Rules will be laminated and hung from each dugout for reference during games. If this copy is missing coaches should alert their Division Director, or the Director of Softball Operations, so that it can be replaced.
  - iv. Each Head Coach will receive a hard copy of the USA Softball rule book.
- b. Divisions
  - i. TSA will offer the following divisions for softball:
    - 1. 6U (Tee Ball)
    - 2. 8U (Coach Pitch)
    - 3. 10U (Modified Player Pitch)
    - 4. 12U (Player Pitch)
  - ii. Player's divisions will be determined by their age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the season year. The season runs from August 1 through July 31.
  - iii. Players may request to play up one division per the [TSA Play Up Policy](#). No exceptions will be made to this policy. Any requests made outside of the policy, or the approved timeline, will be denied.

## 2022 8U Division Rules

- c. Uniforms
  - i. In the spring season players will receive a jersey, headband, and socks for the season. Pants, belts, cleats, etc. will be communicated by the coaches and are the responsibility of the player.
  - ii. In the fall season players will receive a jersey and headband for the season. Pants, belts, socks, cleats, etc. will be communicated by the coaches and are the responsibility of the player.
  - iii. Jewelry may not be worn during regulation game play. Each team may receive one warning per game where the player removes the jewelry. Another violation of this in the same game will result in the player being called out.
- d. Umpires
  - i. Umpires should be respected by players, coaches, and spectators alike. Any violation of this is cause for disciplinary action, including removal from the park grounds.
  - ii. Head Coaches may appeal calls on the field directly to the umpire that made the call. After appeal, decisions by the umpire(s) are final and game play shall continue.
  - iii. Each team will submit a lineup to the home plate umpire prior to the start of regulation game play.
- e. Coaches
  - i. Coaches, players, or adult volunteers who engage in unsportsmanlike conduct, such as fighting, abusive language, or similarly derogatory behavior, may be ejected from the game and asked to leave the fields. Additional offenses may result in suspension from future games.
  - ii. Coaches should be in their designated areas (see division specific rules) on the field or in the dugout.
  - iii. Coaches may not try to “rattle” any of the players. If a coach’s behavior is seen as being disruptive to the players by an umpire the coach will receive a warning. Any additional offenses will result in the coach being ejected for the remainder of the game.
- f. Players and Rosters
  - i. Each team shall have a minimum of 9-11 players assigned to their roster.
  - ii. Players are encouraged to try new positions, however the spring season is competitive and positions in the field or batting order are not guaranteed to players.
  - iii. No player will sit the bench twice until all players have sat at least once per game.
  - iv. There is a 2 inning limit per game per girl at first base and pitcher. An inning should not be started if a player is at the position for more than 2 innings. The only exception is when we enter an ITB situation upon which the inning limit expires and starts over.
- g. Playoffs
  - i. Each team will make the playoffs.
  - ii. Playoff seeding will be determined by season standings.
  - iii. Any ties situations in the season standings will be addressed by the Division Director and Head Coaches will be notified of the terms prior to the end of the scheduled season games.
  - iv. Playoffs will be structured as a single elimination bracket.
  - v. Player pickups are not allowed during playoff games unless pickups are agreed to by the Coaches, Division Director, and approved by the Softball Director prior to the start of the scheduled game.
  - vi. WEATHER: if rainouts and/or weather prevent rescheduling of games to complete the playoffs, the bracket will be determined by coin flips. The coach of the higher seeded team can select a single flip or 2 out of 3 format and may choose to call or defer the call to the other team’s coach. Coin will be flipped by the Director of Softball or an umpire if one is present.

## 2022 8U Division Rules

### III. Division Game Play Rules

#### a. Regulation Game Play

- i. A regulation game will consist of six (6) full innings or 70 minutes of play, whichever comes first. Time duration during weeknight games may be modified to accommodate daylight.
- ii. A new inning will not be started after 70 full minutes of play. If a new inning is started before the game clock is expired the inning will be completed.
- iii. A half inning consists of three outs or five runs, whichever comes first.
- iv. If a game is called in the middle of an inning after the 4<sup>th</sup> inning the game is complete, and the score will be that of the last completed inning of play.
- v. Games that are called in the middle of an inning before the 4<sup>th</sup> inning shall be resumed from the last fully completed inning.
- vi. A run rule format of ten (10) runs will be used for all games. If after four (4) innings either team is ahead by ten runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire.
- vii. Regular season games that are tied at the end of the 6th inning, or 70 minutes, are complete and the game will be recorded as a tie.
- viii. Playoff games that cannot end in a tie will utilize a modified version of the International Tiebreaker Rule (ITB). At the end of regulation play if the game is tied, the next inning will follow modified ITB to guarantee a winner. The last two hitters from the previous inning on the offensive team will be placed on first and second base respectively, and two outs will be counted against the team at the beginning of the new ITB inning. Regular play resumes. The modified ITB rule will be used in each consecutive inning until an inning is completed with one team emerging as the winner.

#### b. Field

- i. The distance between the center of the pitcher's rubber and the apex of home plate is 35 feet.
- ii. The distance between bases is 60 feet.
- iii. The double base will be used at first base. This base is 15" x 30" with both sides equal in height. Half of the base is white (over fair territory) and half of the base is of contrasting color (over foul territory).
- iv. The pitcher's circle will be an 8-foot radius drawn from the front edge of the pitcher's rubber.
- v. Chalk lines will be required for foul lines, the pitcher's circle, halfway marks on the first and third baselines, and the batter's box.

#### c. Equipment

- i. The 8U division will use an official 11" RIF softball. Game balls are provided by the league, one per team per game.
- ii. All infield positions will be required to wear a facemask.
- iii. All outfield positions are HIGHLY encouraged to wear a facemask.
- iv. Catchers are required to wear a full set of catcher's gear while behind the plate. This includes chest pad, shin guards, and helmet. One set will be provided per team. Game time catcher's gear will be stored under the press box and must be returned there after each game by the coaches. A batting helmet may not be worn by the catcher.
- v. Player's bats must meet current USA/ASA standards. It is the responsibility of the player and coaches to ensure bats are legal prior to the start of a game.
- vi. All batters are required to wear a protective batting helmet with a face mask and chin strap while batting and baserunning.

#### d. Coaches Positions

##### i. Offensive Coaches

1. Offensive team coaches may be positioned at pitcher, first, and third base.
2. Base coaches are not allowed to physically assist runners at any time (ie stopping runners, assisting runners back on base, or pushing runners toward the next base). In this event the physically assisted runner will be called out.

## 2022 8U Division Rules

3. One coach can stand/sit immediately outside of the dugout if (s)he is not on the field.
  4. Coaches who are pitching cannot provide verbal instructions to base runners before a play.
  5. Coaches who are pitching can only provide general instruction to the batter before (s)he starts their pitching motion. It is at the umpire's discretion to warn a coach if excessive direction is being given and causing a delay of the game.
- ii. Defensive Coaches
1. Defensive teams may position one coach in each foul territory area.
  2. Defensive coaches may verbally reposition fielders between batters, and verbally coach during a live ball.
  3. The defensive coaches may not leave the foul territory area and enter the field of play at any time.
  4. One coach may sit/stand immediately outside of the dugout.
  5. Between batters the coaches may verbally direct players of field positions if needed.
  6. A defensive coach may play catcher ONLY in the event of playing shorthanded. (S)He will only be there to retrieve pitched balls and may not coach batters or runners and may not interfere with a play.
- e. Rosters and Positions
- i. Each team roster will consist of a minimum of 9-11 players.
  - ii. A team may begin or end a game with 7 players, utilizing 2 outfielders instead of 4, and a volunteer catcher. (Playing shorthanded)
  - iii. If a team is playing with 8 players, they must utilize 2 outfielders instead of 4 and a catcher.
  - iv. In the event a team plays with 7 players the vacant positions must be listed on the batting lineup and an out will be recorded when the vacant position(s) is scheduled to bat. One out per inning for lineup vacancies (ie 8<sup>th</sup> batter is an out, skip the 9<sup>th</sup> batter).
  - v. In the event a team does not have enough players to play shorthanded, they may pick up a player to avoid forfeiture of the game. Teams may only pick up the number of players required to meet the minimum roster size of nine (9) players.
  - vi. Players who are picked up on a team must be registered at TSA, in the same eligible age group or below, in the same draft order position or below for the season, will play the outfield positions only, and will bat at the bottom of the lineup. All player pickups must be agreed upon in advance of the game by both team's head coaches and approved by the division director. For playoff games the player pickups must meet all of the above and be approved by the director of softball operations prior to the start of the game.
  - vii. If a team has less than 7 players show up for a game the team will forfeit the game.
- f. Fielding
- i. There will be 10 defensive fielding positions:
    1. Pitcher
    2. Catcher
    3. First Base
    4. Second Base
    5. Third Base
    6. Short Stop
    7. Left Field
    8. Left Center Field
    9. Right Center Field
    10. Right Field
  - ii. The first baseman, pitcher, and catcher are permitted to tag a batter out after the batter hits the ball in play and before the batter touches first base. When any other position endeavors to make an out at first base the ball must be thrown overhand to an eligible

## 2022 8U Division Rules

- player, unless close proximity warrants an underhand toss. The only exception is if proximity warrants a player to back up 1B during natural game play (ie 2B covers 1B). This is at the umpire's discretion.
- iii. For all other baserunners, the defensive fielder must throw the ball to get an out, unless she is close to the runner and can easily tag the runner out. The defensive player cannot run around the field to tag a runner out (i.e. shortstop running to tag the runner going from first base to second base).
  - iv. The play is considered dead once the lead runner is stopped on a base and the ball is controlled by a fielder in the infield.
  - v. An outfielder must throw the ball to the infield to stop the play. The only exception is if proximity warrants the player to back up a play and they move to the infield during natural game play. This is at the umpire's discretion.
  - vi. If the ball is hit into play back to the kid pitcher, in the pitcher's circle, the fielding pitcher must throw the ball to first or another base to try and get an out. This is to encourage the girls to throw the ball.
  - vii. If the ball is juggled by the pitcher in an attempt to throw and there is no longer a play, the ball may be called dead at the discretion of the umpire.
  - viii. Fielders must stand at their intended position location. Major shifts are not allowed.
  - ix. All outfielders must start each play at an invisible line halfway between the outfield fence and the infield dirt. With the exception of ready/creep steps, no significant forward motion(s) should be made by an outfielder until the ball is hit into play.
  - x. Fielders may not stand on top of the bases and must provide a clear path for the baserunner. It is at the umpire's discretion to call obstruction/interference as they see fit, call the runner safe, and award the base to the runner.
  - xi. Fielders may not be in the direct line of the runner (ie positioned on the baseline) unless they are actively attempting to make a play. It is at the umpire's discretion to call interference/obstruction as they see fit, call the runner safe, and award the runner the base.
  - xii. It is recommended that all players be allowed to play at different positions each game but is not required. It is encouraged that players rotate and learn positions at this age.
  - xiii. No player will sit the bench twice until all players have sat at least once per game. The first violation during the season of this rule will be a warning. Any additional violations in the same season may warrant a coach's removal from their team.
- g. Pitching
- i. The 8U division will utilize a coach pitch with a player designated to the pitcher position.
  - ii. A batter will receive 6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever comes first.
  - iii. A batter may not be walked by a coach pitch.
  - iv. Coach pitches that are hit foul will be played per regular game play rules. A batter will not be called out on a foul ball unless it is properly fielded for the out by an eligible player.
  - v. A coach pitcher must start with both feet inside the pitcher's circle.
  - vi. The player pitcher must be positioned to the side and behind the coach pitcher with at least one foot inside the pitching circle until the ball is in play.
  - vii. Once the ball is hit into play the coach pitcher must make every attempt to rapidly exit the field and avoid interfering with game play. If an umpire determines the coach intentionally interfered with a play it is at their discretion to call the batter out.
  - viii. If a coach pitch is hit back at and strikes the coach pitcher the ball is called dead, no ball or strike is called, the batter receives another pitch, and the runners may not advance. The exception to this is if the players touch the ball and attempt a play before the dead ball is called, then the play is live. This is at the umpire's discretion.
  - ix. Players must return the ball to the kid pitcher and the kid pitcher will hand the ball to the coach pitcher. (ie catcher may not throw the ball directly to the coach pitcher).
- h. Catcher

## 2022 8U Division Rules

- i. Catchers are required to wear full protective catcher's gear at all times during the game. The only exception is removing the helmet in an attempt to field a pop up or foul ball for an out.
  - ii. Catchers must position behind the batter's box in the proper regulation catching area.
  - iii. Catchers may not stand on home plate. It is at the umpire's discretion to call obstruction/interference as they see fit and award the run to the runner.
  - iv. Catchers may not be in the direct line of the baserunner unless there is an active play at home. These calls are at the home plate umpire's discretion.
- i. Batting
- i. The entire roster of players present for a game will bat in rotation.
  - ii. All players on each team will bat in a fixed batting order, per the lineups provided at the beginning of regulation game play. The batting order may not be changed after the start of regulation game play.
  - iii. The batting order for each team will be presented to the umpires and official scorekeeper before each game begins. Any player that arrives after the game has started shall bat in their original batting order position if that position has not batted in the game yet. Otherwise the position is skipped in the order without penalty, and the late arriving player is placed at the bottom of the batting order. The umpires and official scorekeeper shall be informed of any late player additions or changes proactively before the start of the game.
  - iv. If a player refuses to bat at their official order in the lineup the player will be called out.
  - v. If a player is ejected from a game for any reason that player's position in the batting order will remain and any scheduled at bat will be recorded as an out.
  - vi. If a player leaves a game willingly for any reason that player's position in the batting order will be skipped without recording an out. The only exception to this is if the player's absence drops the roster to 7 players or less, in which case the above-mentioned short play rule will be effective and an out will be recorded.
  - vii. Batters are not permitted to bunt.
  - viii. Batters are not awarded a base if they are hit by a coach pitch.
  - ix. A pitch that hits the ground before hitting the batter is not an awarded base and will count as called by the umpire in the count.
- j. Lead offs and Base Stealing
- i. Base runners are not permitted to steal bases.
  - ii. Base runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If a runner leaves the base early the runner will be called out and no strike or ball will be called on the batter (no pitch).
- k. Base Runners, Advancing, and Scoring
- i. Base runners are encouraged to slide into bases (with the exception of first base) when there is a play at that base. If there is a play at home plate the runner is strongly encouraged to slide to avoid injury.
  - ii. Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
    - 1. When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
    - 2. If there is an overthrow to first base the batter/runner may only advance to second base. All other runners may advance at the risk of being thrown out.
    - 3. If there is an overthrow to any base besides first the runners may advance at the risk of being thrown out.
    - 4. When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.
  - iii. Once a play is called dead any runner who has not advanced halfway or more must return to the previous base. This is at the umpire's discretion.
  - iv. Once a play is called dead the baserunners may not advance on an overthrow back to the pitcher.

## 2022 8U Division Rules

- v. A ground rule double will be called for any ball that has contact inside fair territory before bouncing/rolling outside of the outfield fence boundaries. All runners may advance only two bases.
- vi. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
- vii. Infield fly rule is not in effect.

