**HOW IS U9 PLAYED?**

 **Playing Field:**

The field distance will be twenty-five (25) feet behind each base. Pylons to be placed at the Twenty-five (25) foot mark in the field.

A home run is a ball that touches the ground past the home run line.

Field Set-Up - Bases are 45 feet apart. Pitching mound is placed at 30 feet.

Maximum number of players allowed on the playing field is (9).

**Equipment:**

Players should wear suitable running shoes or cleats.

When batting, each player is required to wear a batting helmet with a face mask.

11-inch softie balls to help minimize the risk of injuries.

Gloves are to be worn when on defence.

Catcher must wear all catching gear.

Pitchers must wear pitching mask

Parents are responsible for their children’s belongings and marking each equipment piece with child name is recommended.

**Games:**

6:30 start time, warm up and short practice for 10-15 min. Game to start around 6:45 end at 7:30pm.

Home team will be determined by the schedule and each home team will be in the field first with the away team batting first. Home team will be responsible for setting up the bases.

Pitchers should start in the “K” position with emphasis on proper technique

**Rules:**

1-2 parent helpers are allowed on the playing field to help out the kids

Fly ball caught past the home run line is an out.

Offensive team will have coach or parent as an umpire and will determine if the ball is hit over the homerun line.

No base stealing

Batters will not be permitted to bunt.

Scoresheet will only be kept to keep track of outs. Standings will not be kept as the emphasis is on player and team skill development not on winning.

Inning will be complete if 3 outs are achieved or everyone in the lineup has had a turn at batting.

No walk rule will be in effect (See below)

Note: Adjustments can be made at the discretion of the Executive Members

No Walks rule: To add even more excitement Lethbridge Minor Softball implemented the “No Walk Rule”. Combined with the home run line, the U-10 division should end up being the most exciting division to both play and to watch!

Example: Batter # 1 (B1) is at the plate. The game is played normally up until the batter receives a 4th ball, which would normally result in a walk. This is where the game changes. After the 4th ball, the batter will have a count against him/her. It will either be 4 balls, 0 strikes (4-0), 4-1 or 4-2. The coach, or designated pitcher for the offensive team (B1’s coach or selected parent), will now come in to pitch to his/her own batter. The number of pitches that the batter will receive from the coach/parent is dependent upon the number of strikes that the pitcher had achieved against that batter prior to throwing the 4th “ball”. All batters continue using the same rules.

If the count was 4-0, and the batter did not have a strike, the coach parent may throw up to 3 pitches.

If the count was 4-1, and the batter had 1 strike against him/her, the coach parent may throw up to 2 pitches.

If the count was 4-2, and the batter had 2 strikes against him/her, the coach parent may throw only 1 pitch.

Pitches (pitch) from the coach or parent are the only opportunity that the batter will get to hit the ball and get on base. There is no opportunity to walk. Every pitch will be considered a called strike. If the batter has 2 or 3 pitches to work with, he/she may leave the pitch and wait for a potentially better pitch. The coach/parent will pitch from the pitching rubber (normal distance) and may pitch orthodox (underhand toss) or regular fastpitch.

If the batter uses up all his/her strikes without hitting the ball, he/she is out. Once again, every pitch is considered a called strike no matter where the pitch is thrown. The batter does not have to swing to strike out, nor does the pitch have to be in the strike zone.

On the third strike only, if the batter hits a foul ball, he/she will be granted an additional pitch, unless of course the foul ball is caught! This will be the same as regular rules regarding a third strike foul ball.

The defensive pitcher will remain on the field-to-field balls hit into play.

Should a ball be hit into play by the batter and this ball comes in contact with or is touched by the parent/coach, whether intentional or accidental, as determined by the umpire, the play will be called dead. If there is any interference on the play in regard to the coach/parent acting as the pitcher, as determined by the umpire, the play will be called dead. In both cases, the batter will be ruled out and the runners will return to their original base prior to the hit ball.

The implementation of this section will have many major benefits.

# 1 – No walks means that every run will have come off a hit ball!

# 2 – More hits mean more defensive plays for the infield!

# 3 – Less pressure on parent umpires regarding calling balls and strikes.

# 4 – Wider variety of pitchers may be used. Every player that wants to pitch can try without having to worry about walking in 5 runs.

# 5 – Lower scoring games. There will an increased number of strikeouts and hopefully defensive outs, which should result in less 5 run innings.

# 6 – Innings will be quicker which should result in more innings played per game.

# 7 – The home run line will become a major factor and the home run will be an exciting play for all players and fans to look forward to.