

Softball PEI – U9 Rules

Pitching Distance: 30 Feet

Ball Size: 11 inch

Base Distance: 45 Feet

Game Length: 5 innings or 1.5 hours time limit

Open Innings: There are no open innings. 7 batters per inning.

Mercy Rule: There is no mercy rule for U9.

Game Rules:

- **Rules are firm and are not to be changed by coaches.**
- Please see the additional handout regarding 7 on 7.
- **Pitching: Hybrid Pitching Strategy:** Season Open-August 1 the coaches will pitch to the players. Starting August 1 the players will pitch. With 3 pitches from players, 4 pitches from coach (total 7 pitches MAX, regardless if missed or fouled off), 1 ball off tee.
- Pitchers can only pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game
- The infield fly rule is **not** in effect.
- Home Run line comes into effect August 1 (see information below)
- Sliding is allowed.

U9 - 7 on 7 Program

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The U9 program, 7 against 7, is the logical continuation of the Learning to Play Program.

In order to make the practice of softball more attractive, we are convinced that this new way to play for this age category will allow young athletes to progress while having fun.

Here are some goals we believe we can achieve through this program:

- Promote the game
- Increase the opportunities to hit, to score and to play defensive
- That the player is in constant motion
- Increase the pleasure of athletes (and parents)
- Increase the % of retention - athletes who return the following year (interest of the player)
- Decrease competitiveness and the concept of victory-defeat
- Learning basic techniques and introduction to traditional softball

In addition to playing more, the athlete will have better coaching support in her development because the number of players per team is limited to 10 (may have to vary depending on association). Coaches must provide training periods so that players learn the different basic rules of softball. These fundamental principles of the sport will have to be developed:

- Hitting
- Pitching
- Catching
- Running
- Throwing
- Defensive game play

PRINCIPLES OF GAME

- Minimum of **6** players - maximum of 10 players per team (may vary per association)
- If your team is short players you are allowed to borrow players from other U9 teams within your association to make up the minimum required.
- Game of 5 innings to finish or time limit (1.5 hours)
- Pitchers plate at 30 feet
- Bases at 45 feet
- 11 inch ball
- No maximum points per inning, it is the hit of the 7th batter that determines the end of the inning
- No point differential, the goal is to let the athletes play.

Defensive play:

- 7 players maximum in defensive position on the field, of which:
 - 1 player maximum in defensive at pitcher position (when pitcher coach in play)
 - The 7th player is placed behind the baselines (1st to 2nd or 2nd to 3rd) (This defensive player should be playing approximately 50-55ft behind the bases)
 - Other 5 players in the infield on or inside the baselines including the catcher (These players are playing at the 45ft mark or slightly inside of the baselines).
- Two coaches maximum allowed on the field to facilitate understanding of the game
- After a full inning of play, players are rotated on the field of play so that a player cannot be inactive for more than one round
- A player cannot field at the same position for more than 2 innings per game (including pitcher-player). In case of non-compliance with the rule, the situation should be rectified before the next throw.

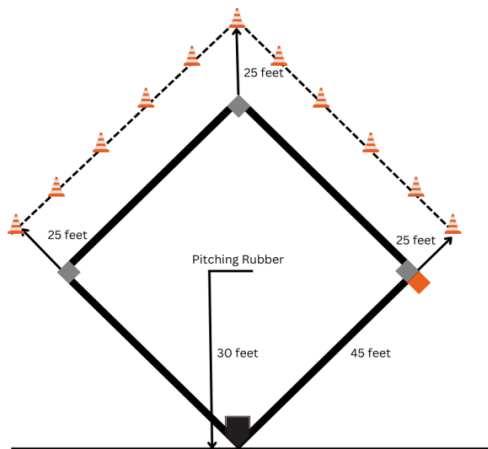
- Surplus players (those on the bench each inning when 7 are in the field playing (if you have more than 7 players during the game)) can use the turf space in the field to have learning workshops

Offensive play:

- All players are registered on the starting line.
- At each inning, 7 batters will appear on the plate regardless of the number of outs made in this inning.
- The inning ends when the 7th batter has finished her batting turn and the defensive play is finished (ball returned to the infield).
- If the team has more than 7 players, in the next inning, the at bat continues with the player next in the starting lineup, and returns to the first batter until 7 hitters.
- If the team only has 7 players, we start the next inning with the 2nd batter of the previous round. (Example: 1st inning bat player 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 2nd inning bat players 2,3,4,5,6,7,1 3rd inning bat player 3,4,5,6,7,1,2 and so on)
- No stealing bases
- No base on balls (walk)
- No bunts
- No infield fly rule will be called
- Runner advances on bases:
 - Runners do not have the right to advance on an error
 - Runners are not allowed to leave their base until the ball has been hit or the batter swings. If there is an infraction, the runner is returned to her base and the ball is dead.
 - On a ball hit by the 7th hitter of the inning and during a run towards home plate, of a runner coming from 3rd base, the point does not count if there is an out on bases.
- Ball hit
 - A ball hit directly over the infield without touching the ground (in the air) will be considered a maximum of two bases. Runners present on the bases may advance a maximum of 2 bases.
 - A ball hit on the ground through the infield and piercing it (*"Piercing" the infield refers to a hard ground ball that gets past the infielders and rolls into the outfield.*), will give access of up to 2 bases for the batter and the runners at their risk.
 - A ball hit on the ground at the infield, will give access to one base only. The runners will be able to go only to the next base they were trying to, at their risk.
 - A ball hit directly over the infield (in the air over the 45ft baseline) by the 7th batter will allow this batter to run until she is stopped by the defensive or that she scores a point (in-the-park home run, only for the last batter).
- Outs
 - No out limit per inning (7 batters coming to the bat)

- Home Run (starting Aug 1)
Putting in a home run line 25ft behind the bases (70ft) that will be earned by hitting off “**player pitches only**”.

Home Run Line



To make the game more fun for the kids and exciting for the parents.

The Home Run Line is a series of cones or pylons set up in the outfield 25 feet past the 45' base line (70ft) as shown in the diagram. **The home team will do this prior to the game.**

A home run is

- A home run is a ball that crosses in the air past the home run line (70ft) when the player is pitching, the player is able to run all the bases no matter batting position.
- When the coach pitches no home runs permitted, the ground rule double comes into effect. The umpire will determine if a ground ball lands past the home run line.
- Any ball that touches the ground in fair territory past the home run line is a home run.
- When the home run rule is in effect after August 1st, if the 7th batter hits off a "player" pitcher over the 70ft home run line, it is a home run and cannot be defensively stopped *"unless it is caught before touching the ground"*. However, if the 7th batter (only) hits the ball in the air over the infielders (45ft) off **any** pitcher (player or coach), they can run all the bases until home (an in-the-park home run) or until they are defensively out or stopped.

A home run is not

- A fly ball hit past the HRL but caught by a defensive player prior to touching the ground, this is not a home run. It is an out!!
- A fair ball hit past 1st or 3rd. base and going into foul territory prior to reaching the home run line is a fair ball, but not a home run. The play is live.

Rule for counting points:

- We count the runs scored in each inning by each team but only to determine who wins the inning
 - The team with the most runs in the inning wins the inning and 1 point will be awarded to them
 - A tie does not give any points to either team for the inning
 - An unfinished inning gives no points to either teams
 - If only 4 innings are played, the game is declared a tie if the score is 2-2
- Maximum 5 points per game for the winning team
- This method avoids big final score discrepancies
- Allows a team that, for example, has lost an inning 7-0 to still have the chance to win the game

