



Sherwood Park Minor Softball

U7 Program 2022

Objectives:

- Creating a fun environment for children to learn softball
- Developing sportsmanship, teamwork and a sense of fair play
- Increasing skill and understanding of the game of softball

Diamond dimensions:

- Base path distance: 45 feet (63 feet from home to 2nd)
- Pitching distance: 30 feet
- Pylons are set up 25 feet beyond the base paths, as a 'home run' fence. Any ball that gets past the pylons is a home run. (i.e. it can fly past or be a ground ball which rolls past, both are home runs. If a defensive player touches the ball before it goes past the pylons, it is a double.)

Ball:

- 10" Softie ball

Equipment:

- Players provide their own glove and running shoes
- Helmets and chin strap worn by all batters (cage optional), base runners, and on deck batters. Players are encouraged to have their own, but there will be some team helmets available.
- Bats, balls, etc. all provided by SPMSA, there will be one 'squeaky' base for first and two throw down bases in each equipment bag, home team to set up the diamond

Play:

There should be 2 coaches in the field to help players with positioning and to guide play. After the ball is hit from the tee the coaches should not touch or stop the ball, but assist players with where to throw it, run with it, etc. Players should not play more than 2 consecutive innings at the same position.

Skill Development: 6:00pm – 6:30pm

- Warm up
 - Home team has the shale and the visitors have the field
 - Teams can opt to run a practice together depending on the number of players that night
- Skills – pick 1 or 2 to work on per game
 - Throwing / Catching
 - Fielding
 - Hitting
 - Game Scenario (where to go with the ball)
 - Rules (what's an out?, which way do I run?)

Game –6:30pm – 7:15pm

Game, no new inning will start after 7:05 pm.

Game Play: The home team starts on the field. If possible, try not to use outfielders... Add short stops and a rover. *Note: There is no catcher in the U7 division.* A coach will be the catcher to keep the game moving faster. **Each offensive inning consists of running through the batting order once.**

Batting

For May: depending on the skill/experience of the players, you can forgo 'coach pitch' and hit off the tee coaches to choose what is best for their group of players. The goal is to move towards 'coach pitch' by the end of the season, particularly for the players moving on to U9. We will evaluate where players are at going into the second half of the season.

Coach Pitch Procedure

- Pitching coach will pitch a maximum of 5 balls per batter (except if the 5th pitch is hit foul, see more below). The batter can swing at all 5, or none. Encourage players to swing at 'good' pitches and leave the bad ones. Coach that is assisting the hitter will throw the ball back (or choose a volunteer to do so)
- If the batter has not put the ball in play after the 5th pitch, a tee will be set up by the coach for the player to hit from.
- If a batter fouls off the 5th pitched ball, the coach will keep pitching. If they miss the 6th pitch following a foul, the tee is set up for the batter. (i.e. Batter cannot be out on a foul ball)
- The coach pitcher should be aware to protect the player next to them from a 'come back' line drive, if possible.
- All hits result in a single except for home runs. Encourage players to run through first base. Turn to their right and return to the bag. There are no doubles/triples, and no running on overthrows to any base.

Pylons are set up 25 feet beyond the base paths, as a 'home run' fence. Any ball that gets past the pylons is a home run. (i.e. it can fly past or be a ground ball which rolls past, both are home runs.) If a defensive player touches the ball before it goes past the pylons, it is a double.) Cheer hard for those home runs!

- No stealing. No bunting. No walks.
- Base runners advance only on batted balls, and can advance a maximum of one base only, except for home runs. (No running on overthrows)

Game tips:

- Consider using an alphabetical batting order, by first name. Same batting order, continuous, all year long. Player who was 'on deck' to bat at the end of the last game is the first to bat in the next game.
- Consider using a whiteboard for batting order and positions; hang it on the backstop facing the parents/bench. Will help players (and parents) know who is up next and to be ready... also to know which position they're going to.
- Teach during the game. Coaches can assist batter to get set up, ensure they know to not swing until the space is clear

- When in the field – coaches are in the field too... behind the infielders, providing encouragement and instruction.

Bye Night

With 5 teams this year there will be some bye nights for each team. Teams will use the practice component as they normally would. For the game component, you will be playing a game called B5. Siblings and other parents are welcome to play but must sign the waiver sheet. See more information about the game [here](#).

Note: in the event some teams are short players to play a game, please see if some players can 'affiliate' and join the team short of players for the game section.