



WHEATON PARK DISTRICT GIRLS SOFTBALL

Instructional League

The **Instructional League (Modified Coach Pitch)** has been established as an intermediate step between the *Co-Ed T-Ball League* and *A-League*, preparing players for the transition from hitting the ball off the “T” to hitting a “Coach” pitched ball. The league is limited to those players currently in the Kindergarten and 1st grade at the start of the season.

This league, like *Co-ed T-Ball*, is an introduction to the fundamentals of organized Softball. The intent of Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball/Softball is to teach players the rules of the game, develop skills, provide an opportunity for fun, and teach teamwork and good sportsmanship.

USSSA’s Official Fastpitch Playing Rules and By-Laws, 15th Edition, are the Official Rules of Play (available at http://usssa.com/docs/2020/FPRB_Online_revised_011620.pdf unless otherwise stated in these **2024 Instructional League Supplementary Rules** and the **WPD Youth Baseball / Softball “Policies and Procedures”**).

Managers and Coaches are expected to read the following sections of the USSSA Rules: “Rule 17: Coach Pitch and Machine Pitch Rules” (p. 67-69) and the Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball/Softball “Policies and Procedures”.

2024 SUPPLEMENTARY RULES

1. LEAGUE-SPECIFIC GENERAL RULES

- A. An umpire is not provided at this level of play. It is up to the Managers to agree on a suitable umpire(s) from the many involved parents attending the game.
- B. Bases will be 50 feet apart. The pitching rubber will be **30** feet from home plate, measured from the rear point of home plate to the front edge of the pitching rubber (see diagram on page 4).
- C. Game duration will be 5 innings except as follows:
 1. A new inning may not start after 7:30 p.m.
 2. For all games, including weekend games, a new inning may not start any later than 90 minutes after the scheduled start time of the game.
NOTE: *A new inning begins immediately after the last out of the preceding inning.*
 3. A game is official at the end of 3½ innings. If play is stopped before the game is official, it is in the coaches’ discretion in cooperation with the League Vice President to attempt to reschedule the game for another date and time. Any such rescheduled game shall be played from the point where play was stopped.
- D. Bad weather or field condition may result in the postponement or cancellation of a game. Prior to the scheduled game start time, if no league official is present, the Home Team Manager will make the final decision to play, postpone or cancel the game due to field condition or weather. **See the Wheaton Park District’s “Storm Policy” in the *Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball/Softball Policies and Procedures*.**

- E. Free substitution is permitted on defense, but such substitution will take place only between innings. During an inning a player cannot be brought off the bench to play except if an injury occurs. Players may not change positions during an inning with the exception of the 10th player.
- F. All attending players will play defense the maximum number of innings possible given the number of players present. This means that no player will sit out 2 innings unless all players have sat out 1 inning, and no player will sit 3 innings unless all players have sat out 2. In addition, a player will not sit out 2 consecutive innings.
- G. Every player must play at least two innings in a position other than the three outfield positions, during a complete game. Failure to comply will result in Board action.
INTENT: *It is mandatory that Managers rotate all defensive players.*
- H. There will be no standings kept for this league.

2. LEAGUE-SPECIFIC OFFENSE RULES

- A. Official scores are not maintained; however, the end of an inning is defined as 3 outs or if one team has 5 players cross home plate during the inning.
- B. Base stealing is not allowed. Base runners must be in contact with the base when the ball is hit. If a runner leaves a base too soon, the ball will be called dead, a “no pitch” will be declared, and all runners must return to the base they were at when the infraction occurred.

NOTE: *Regarding rules C, D & E below. Each batter will receive a maximum of 4 pitches from the Coach Pitcher. If after 4 pitches a fair ball hasn't been hit the Coach Pitcher will exit the pitching rubber, set up the “T” and the player will be allowed a maximum of 3 attempts to hit a fair ball into play from the “T”.*

- C. A batter must take a regular full swing at the ball. A strike will be called on the batter if she intentionally bunts the ball.
- D. A ball is hit fair if it is hit between the foul lines (or at least 15 feet in front of the “T”, if a “T” is used) and when it rolls dead or is first touched by a defensive player. All other hit balls or missed swings are considered to be strikes, with 3 strikes being recorded as a strikeout.
- E. When a “T” is used, a batter is allowed to adjust the height of the tee only 1 time after having taken the first official swing. The “coach assisting” (umpire) behind the plate is required to move the tee from home plate after a ball has been hit.
- F. ***All base runners must attempt to avoid a collision with a fielder in possession of the ball, catching a thrown ball or about to field a batted ball.*** Any runner who remains on her feet and crashes into a fielder making the play in these situations, whether intentional or not, will be called out for interference. Furthermore, if the act is determined to be flagrant or malicious, the offender will be restricted to the bench for the duration of the game. Runners have three options to avoid a collision: slide into the base they are going to, step around a fielder, or pull up and allow themselves to be tagged.

NOTE: *A collision that occurs when an errant throw draws a defensive player into the path of the runner is considered to be incidental contact. It is not interference, and no penalty will be imposed to either the defensive or offensive player.*

Conversely, a fielder may not impede the progress of a runner who is legally running bases while not in possession of the ball, not about to field a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball. Obstruction will be called in these situations, and the appropriate ruling will be made.

- G. Bunting **will not** be allowed.
- H. The infield fly rule **will not** apply.
- I. There will be no on deck circle on the playing field.
- J. If the player who will catch for the next 1/2 inning is on base and there are 2 outs, a courtesy runner shall be used to replace that player. The catcher should be ready by the third out (unless they were the last batter).

3. LEAGUE-SPECIFIC DEFENSE RULES

- A. A team may play a maximum of 10 players. All defensive players must play regular softball positions. The 10th player must play as a fourth outfielder. All four outfielders must start each pitch in the outfield grass. No player, except the pitcher and the catcher, will be closer than 45 feet to the batter when the ball is hit. The pitcher must stand next to the coach who is pitching and be no closer than 33 feet from the plate.
- B. On a Ball Field composed of dirt and grass, the infield area is defined as the dirt part of the field. The outfield is defined as the grass behind the dirt. On an all-grass or all-dirt field, the outfield is defined as the area beginning 10 feet beyond the 1st & 2nd, and the 2nd & 3rd baselines.
- C. Attempting to throw the runner out without fear of potential failure is important to the development of the defensive player. Therefore, the following rules apply to determine what base a runner is entitled to as a result of a hit fair ball:
 - 1. When a hit fair ball is initially retrieved in the base path, the runners may advance only to the base they were going to at the time of retrieval by the fielder regardless of whether the retrieved ball is held or thrown. If the ball is not retrieved (e.g., hit into the outfield), runners may advance no more than 2 bases.
 - 2. If a hit fair ball is initially retrieved in the outfield area the runner(s) may advance only to the bases they are going to at the time the ball is returned to the possession of an infielder in the infield area.
 - 3. Possession is defined as having the ball in one's hand or glove.
- D. If a foul fly ball is caught, the batter is out, and no runner may advance. If a pop-up is caught in the infield, the batter is out, and no runner may advance. If a fly ball is caught in the outfield, the batter is out, and runners may advance at their own risk after they have tagged up.

NOTE: *In regard to the previous rules (C&D), it is important to note that runners are eligible to be thrown out even if they are not entitled to advance. If a player has advanced safely to a base beyond which she is entitled to, she will be awarded a safe return to the proper base when the play has been completed and the ball is dead.*

- E. There are no walks.
- F. The Coach Pitcher must pitch from the pitching rubber.
- G. A defensive player must play the pitcher position within 2 feet of the pitching rubber, even with the pitching rubber and Coach Pitcher.
- H. Each batter will receive a maximum of 4 pitches from the Coach Pitcher. If after 4 pitches a fair ball has not been hit the Coach Pitcher will exit the pitching rubber, set up the "T" and the player will be allowed a maximum of 3 attempts to hit a fair ball into play from the "T". The defensive player at the pitcher position must remain on the field at the pitching rubber. (Refer to Section 2, Rules C., D. & E. when using a "T")
- I. The defensive team may have 2 coaches in the outfield. The coaches may offer brief instruction to players but may not interfere with the progress of the game.

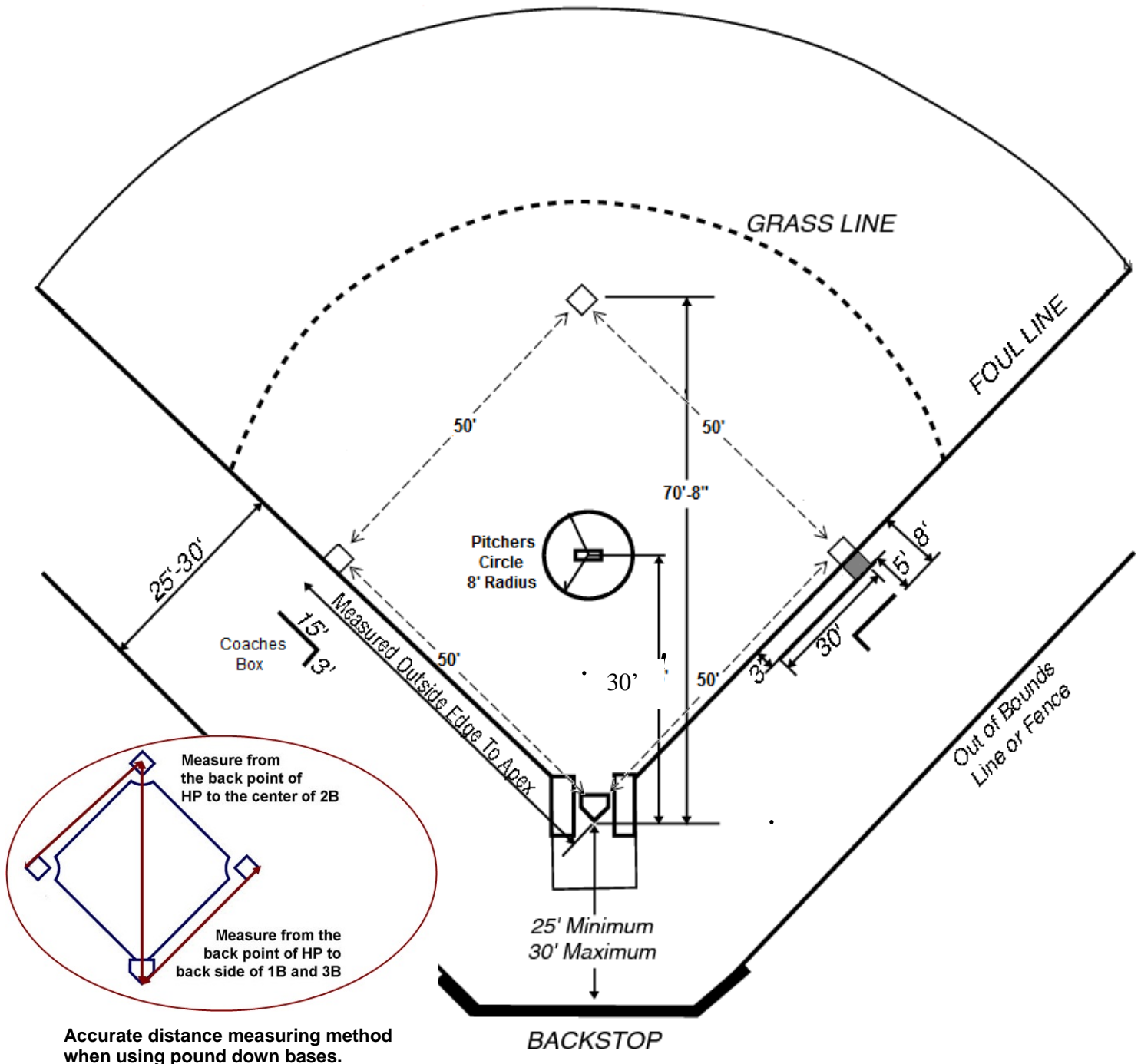


Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball / Softball Board of Control

FAST PITCH SOFTBALL

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE (K & 1st Grade)

Field Dimensions, Marking Lines and Distances



Accurate distance measuring method when using pound down bases.

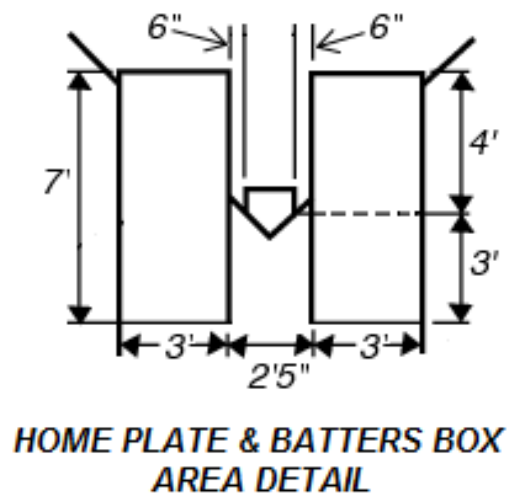
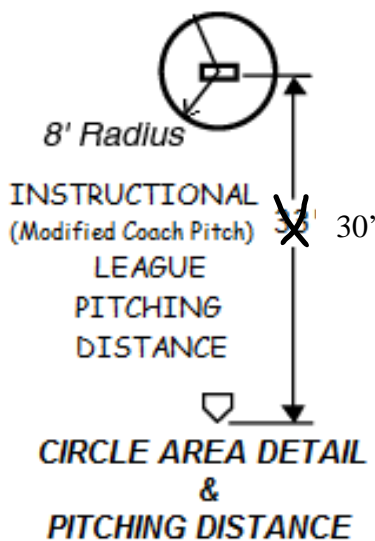
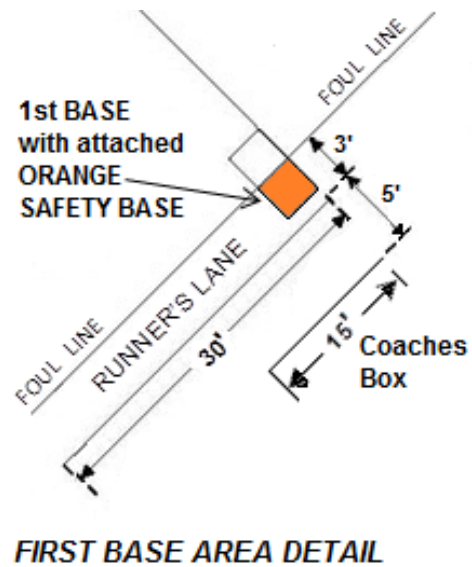
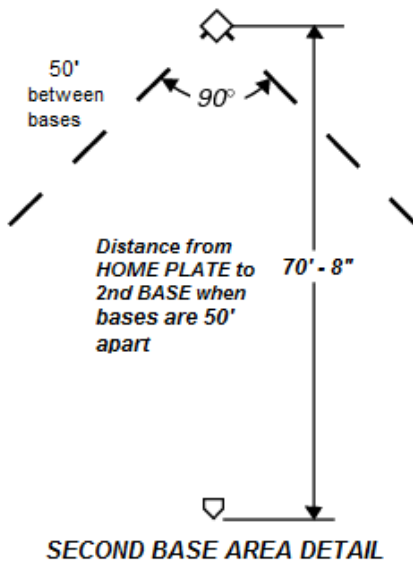


Wheaton Park District Youth Baseball / Softball Board of Control

FAST PITCH SOFTBAL

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE (K & 1st Grade)

Specific Field Area Detail





Youth Baseball / Softball Board of Control

FAST PITCH SOFTBALL

Rules for Orange Safety Bases

Softball & Baseball Rules for Orange Safety Bases

In youth softball and baseball, one integral step toward safety is the use of the safety base at first. This innovation leads to fewer collisions along the base line and less risk of injury. The first baseman makes the play by standing on the original base while the runner will run over the orange safety base.

Description

The safety base is built as two standard bases in one. A standard baseball or softball base measures 15 inches by 15 inches. A safety base measures 15 inches by 30 inches. Half the base is the standard white color and the other half is fluorescent orange.

Placement

The safety base is used only at first base and is placed directly on the first base foul line. The white portion of the safety base is placed inside of the foul line - in fair territory, the orange half is placed in foul territory.

Rules

The safety base is designed to prevent collisions and other contact incidents at first base. The first baseman and other defensive players are only allowed to touch the white portion of the safety base during play. If a defensive player's foot touches the orange portion of the base, the umpire may call interference and award the runner a free base. This is an umpire's judgment call.

The orange base can be used by the fielder if the throw is coming from foul territory. In this case the runner would use the white base.

On offense, the batter runner must use the orange portion of the base during infield or close plays. Because a batter runner is allowed to run through first base, he/she must run straight through the orange half, remaining in foul territory. If he/she touches the white half on a play at first, the defensive team may appeal the play. If the umpire noticed the runner's foot placement, he/she will be called out. If there is no play to be made at first base, such as on a hit that will result in a double or better, the batter runner may touch the white half of the base while making the turn toward second. Batted balls that hit the white portion of the base are fair, while balls that hit the orange half are foul.

Summary

The use of the safety base not only limits potential dangerous collisions at first but also incidences of ankle injuries caused by one player stepping on another's ankle as they both stretch for the same base. When the first baseman has his/her foot on the white, and the runner sprints over the base, there's a chance of the runner rolling his/her ankle by stepping on the first baseman's foot.