

# Softball Machine Pitch Rules Summary

*\*\*All rules not referenced in this summary follow the 2024 Little League Softball Rulebook\*\**

**Time Limit (Regular Season):** No new inning will start after one hour and forty-five minutes. All regular season games will have a two-hour drop dead time limit. If the last inning is not completed prior to the drop-dead time, the official score reverts to the end of the last full inning. Any game lasting one-hour and forty-five minutes will be considered an official game regardless of the number of innings played. If the home team is winning in the bottom of the last inning and time permits, they shall still bat in the bottom half of the inning.

**Time Limit (Playoffs):** There will be no drop-dead time limit however no new inning will start after one hour and forty-five minutes. If the game is tied at the end of time expiration, the game will continue until a winner is determined.

**Batting Lineup:** Continuous batting lineup will be used.

**Minimum Play:** Must play defensively at least every other inning. All players must sit out once before anyone sits out a second time. All players must play at least 2 innings of infield. The catcher's position is considered an infield position to meet infield requirements.

**Infield Fly:** The infield fly rule will NOT be in effect.

**Run Limits:** A half inning will be complete when 5 runs are scored or 3 outs are made, whichever occurs first. Any runs scored on the last play that exceed 5 runs will not count toward the score. As allowed under Little League Rule 4.10(e) Note (2), the 15-run, 10-run and 8-run mercy rules will NOT be utilized.

**Umpires:** Umpires will not be used in the regular season. The pitching machine operator calls outs at 2<sup>nd</sup> base and home plate. The 1<sup>st</sup> base coach calls outs at 1<sup>st</sup> base and the 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach calls outs at 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

**Number of Players:** A game may start or continue with only 8 players. When the 9th position comes up in the batting order, the position is skipped without penalty as long as it is vacated. Defensively, the coach can choose which position to leave unoccupied.

**Defensive Alignment:** Teams may play with 4 outfielders. Two defensive coaches are allowed on the field and must be positioned in the outfield.

**Pitching Machine:** Set at 30-32 mph, placed 35 ft from the rear tip of home plate to the front bar.

- The player pitcher will stand outside the pitcher's circle and even with the front of the pitching machine and may not move forward until the ball has been released by the machine.
- A batted ball is dead if it strikes the machine or a coach on the field, or if it comes to rest inside the pitcher's circle. In the event of a dead batted ball, the batter is awarded first base and all other base runners advance one base. If a thrown ball hits the pitching machine, runners shall advance to the next base or return to the previous base, based upon the runner's proximity to the 30-foot progression line.
- A coach from the hitting team will feed the pitching machine. Batters will not walk and will not be awarded first base if hit by a pitch. Each at bat will consist of a maximum number of pitches:
  - Machine Pitch SB – maximum 5 pitches in at bat
  - If the 5<sup>th</sup> or subsequent pitch is batted foul, the batter shall remain at bat until he/she strikes out or puts the ball in play. If the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is deemed unhittable by both managers, the batter will be awarded one (or more) additional pitches until the batter receives a hittable pitch.

**Stealing/Bunting:** Stealing will not be allowed in Machine Pitch Softball. Bunting is not allowed in Machine Pitch Softball.

**Baserunning/End of Play:** Baserunners may, at their own risk, advance only one base on an overthrow per batted ball. Runners may only advance one base for a ball ruled out of play. A 14-foot diameter circle will be drawn around the pitching machine. The circle will be divided with a line even with the front bar of the pitching machine. Runners may advance at their own risk until the ball is controlled or comes to rest in the pitcher's circle. A 30-foot progression line will be used at every base. Once the ball is controlled in the circle, a runner will be allowed to proceed to the next base if he/she has crossed the progression line. If the runner has not, he/she will be sent back to the preceding base.

- Example: Ground ball hit to SS, SS overthrows 1B. Runner may advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base at their own risk but no further regardless if ball is controlled in pitcher's circle.
- Example #2: Ball is hit to outfield, runner may continue running until the ball is controlled within the pitcher's circle.