AA Softball Rules

Falmouth, ME Little League

Age Eligibility

- A player's age as of December 31 determines the age in which the player is eligible to play the following year.
    - Players must be no older than 8 years of age on December 31st of the previous year to be eligible to play Falmouth's AA Softball.
    - Players who turned 9 before Dec 31st of the previous year will move to Minors Softball.

General

- The first 20-30 minutes of each scheduled game should be an organized practice.
    - Coaches will alternate use of the infield in a fair manner.
- The game should go quickly with 4-6 innings. This speed is mostly found with adults pitching and catching.
- Coaches pitch to their own players and umpire for their own players.
    - There is a maximum of 6 pitches per player. If the ball is not hit into play by the 6th pitch, the player will hit off a tee. Strikes and balls are not counted at the beginning of this level.
    - 35 ft is the official distance for pitching, but may be modified by the coaches.
    - An adult (parent or coach of the team at bat) must catch (i.e. field pitches that are not hit into play, or foul balls) for the pitcher and throw the ball back to the coach pitcher in a quick manner.

    - If there is a player who wants to try to catch, there must be an adult standing with them who will return an extra ball to the pitching adult in a quick manner.
- The inning ends when the full lineup has either hit a ball or unsuccessfully played 6 pitches for the first 3 weeks of play, or after 3 outs during weeks 4-6 (See Phased Rule Introduction below).
- No one is allowed to hold or touch the bats except the player at bat.
    - No on deck swings, no playing with bats in the dugout.
    - Neither players nor coaches shall throw bats at any point, bats must be walked back to the offensive team's dugout.
- Hair must be secured out of the face, and there may be NO jewelry. No earrings, bracelets, or necklaces. If a player has recently pierced their ears, they must tape over their earrings with sturdy athletic tape - bandaids aren't enough.
- Coaches may utilize any opportunity to instruct players so long as it does not interfere with play. Coaches may stand on the field during defense to help players with positioning, attention, and other needs.

Offense

- Players bat a full lineup each inning.
    - The last batter and any players on base run all the way home regardless of where the ball is in play.
- Players must wear a batting helmet with a face mask.
- No stealing bases.
- No official scores.
- Players may only advance one base at a time until week 2 (see below).

Defense

- This is an introductory stage and the players are focusing on learning rules, and general offense and defense. There are not permanent pitcher or catcher positions.

- We understand that because of softball age limits, some players end up playing three years in AA and might have more skill. When that happens, they may play additional positions, but only as outlined below:
    - Catcher:
        - Teams may play a modified catching position where a catcher stands far behind the batter and 1) attempts to catch the pitch as it rolls to them, and 2) plays the *field position of catcher* once the ball is hit into play. Ex. 1 - a batter hits an infield hit and there is a runner on third coming home. Catcher may step up to home plate and receive a throw from the third-baseman to tag that runner out.
        - Full catcher's gear must be worn to play this position. Parents should help get the player in the gear before the inning begins, speed of play is important at this age.
        - An adult must stand with them and have a bucket of balls on hand to return to the pitcher.
        - If there is an exceptional player who has demonstrated safety and will not slow down the game, coaches may allow a fully outfitted catcher to catch for a coach or player pitcher.
    - Pitcher:
        - A player must demonstrate the ability to get the ball over the plate from the proper distance. If they cannot do so, they cannot pitch and a coach shall not put a pitcher in the game.
        - No warm up pitches are allowed during gametime, all warmups must be done between innings.
        - Player pitchers must pitch with proper form and footwork using the underhanded windmill pitch.
        - A player may only pitch 4 pitches to each batter.
        - The coach must stand next to the pitcher so they may quickly step in after they have exhausted their 4 pitches if the ball has not otherwise been put into play.
        - After the player has pitched, the coach will provide 3-6 more pitches to the batter, based on how many player pitches were reasonably hittable. Hittable pitches for each batter should not exceed 6.
        - A pitcher should not pitch more than 4 innings per game even if they are the only willing pitcher on the team.

- Players should rotate positions at least every game (except pitcher), and coaches may rotate every two innings.
- Infield positions shall be played according to regular rules - this is important to teach buildable knowledge for later levels of play.
    - A pitcher position should be positioned behind the pitching coach and just outside of the pitching circle.
    - Outfield positions may be positioned at the edge of the grass based on hitting abilities of other teams.

Phased Rule Introduction

- After the 2nd full week of games is complete:
    - Teams will begin to advance more than one base.
        - Players may advance more than one base when the ball is hit into the outfield, but must limit their advance to two total bases (a double).
        - If there is an overthrow at a base, the runner may advance a maximum of one base (even if there are multiple overthrows).
        - Ideally teams can recruit additional parent volunteers to be base coaches to assist players.
        - This is intended to give players an opportunity to learn phased base running and more complex fielding without overwhelming the players.

- After the 3rd full week of games is complete:
    - Teams will play *fielding* outs.
        - Outs shall be called by the head coach or assistant coach, whoever is pitching, for the team at-bat. This coach is centrally located and should have a good view of plays at all bases. Coaches need to be as fair and unbiased as possible. Opposing coaches should not argue, but may discuss (see Conflict Resolution).
        - Even though outs are played, the innings will not end at 3 outs until the completion of week 4, they will end when every batter has batted.

        - Fly balls in the infield must be caught for an out to be recorded. Runners on base shall return to their original base without risk of being put out (i.e. no double plays on balls caught before touching the ground).
        - Other fielding outs are played by regular rules.
        - The last batter of the inning runs all of the bases, or a “home run.” The Defensive team may get one out at home base as may otherwise happen in regular play, but the remaining runners will not be considered out and players must remove themselves from home plate to allow the runners to return home safely.
- After the 4th full week of games is complete:
    - The inning will end with 3 outs.
        - Please take every opportunity to ensure that teams have equal at-bats and do not utilize this rule introduction to prevent other teams from gaining valuable at-bat time.
- After the 5th full week of games is complete:
    - Batters will be out after three (3) swinging strikes. There shall be no called (i.e. non swinging) strikes.

Miscellaneous

- **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**
    - Avoid heated conflicts as much as possible. Remember this is AA softball, the focus should not be on winning.
    - Coaches are representatives of Falmouth Little League and should act respectfully and responsibly. Kids and parents are watching, you don’t want to create a spectacle or set a bad example for kids.
    - If a coach has a problem with the opposing team’s coach/es, DO NOT yell across the diamond; instead call a timeout and walk over and have a private conversation with the other coach/es. Usually the situation can be de-escalated by doing so.
    - If a parent or fan is being unruly, aggressive, or verbally abusive the head coach of the player associated with the unruly spectator should take

charge and approach the individual and remind him or her that this is AA softball and that type of behavior is inappropriate and won't be tolerated. Try to relate to them on a personal level, rather than chastise, help him or her to understand that 7-9 year old kids are playing and all coaches are volunteers. If the behavior continues, the head coach should ask him or her to leave. If he or she refuses, the best course of action is to STOP THE GAME and have the players and coaches vacate the field. Report the incident to the Little League Board immediately.

- **FIELD AND DUGOUT SAFETY:**
  - While in the dugout, no climbing on the benches or fences AND no player may have a bat in their hand at any time except when preparing to leave the dugout for their turn at bat. This is a real safety issue and must be constantly monitored by coaches. Recruit parent volunteers to help control the dugouts and ensure players are ready for their turn at-bat.
  - No one is allowed outside the dugout during the inning other than the defensive team, the hitter, base runners, and coaches.

- **CLOSED FIELDS:** When the fields are closed, the fields are closed. This decision will be made by the Town of Falmouth or Little League Board and must be adhered to by the coaches. The decision to close the fields will be posted on the town and FLL website and communicated via email whenever possible.

All other rules follow Little League Softball Rules found in the Rulebook App.



AA/8U	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	
	April 27 - 5/3	May 3-10	May 11-17	May 18-24	May 25-31	June 1-7	
OFFENSE							
Strike Zone	Shoulders to knees, 3" either side of the plate.						
Base Running	Player advances one base at a time; last batter runs all the way around	Player may run two bases if the hit allows for it, may advance one base on an overthrow					
Fielding Outs	Players will not be out - they will run one base per batter	Fielding outs will be played					
Batting Outs	Players will not be out. If they do not hit the ball, they still advance one base	Out after 3 swinging strikes (no called strikes)					
Hit by pitch	Player take first base or continue batting with coach pitch						
On Deck Batting	Not allowed ever - One player with a bat at a time - Little League Rules						
DEFENSE							
Pitching	Coach pitch - may pitch up to 6 balls to get a hit. Player Pitch only as capable, may pitch only 4 pitches, then coach steps in						
Player Positions	Must play a regular position - may not have more than 5 players in the infield - outfielders may stay on the dirt line.						
GENERAL							
Ball Size	11" Softball						
Mandatory Play	Continuous Batting Order - players must have the opportunity to try different positions - may not sit out more than 1 inning.						
Inning over	Inning is over when the full lineup has been at bat.	After 3 outs					