
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 up to AAA.

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.
- Coaches pitch to their own players.
 - There is a maximum of 10 pitches per player. If the ball is not hit into play by the 10th pitch, the player will hit off a tee. Strikes and balls are not counted at 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. No players may catch pitches under any circumstances.
- The inning ends when each player has batted for the first 4 weeks of play, or after 3 outs during weeks 6-7 (See Phased Rule Introduction below).
- Teams should play at least 3 innings, more if time allows.
- No one is allowed to hold or touch the bats except the player at bat.

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- 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.
 - 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. Coaches may not interfere with play.

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 4 (see below).

Defense

- There is no player pitching or catching at this level. This is an introductory stage and the players are focusing on learning rules, and general offense and defense. Pitching and catching are introduced in AAA softball only.
 - Teams may play a modified catching position where a catcher stands diagonally behind the batter, i.e. not directly behind the plate but off to the side, and 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.
 - A helmet with a mask must be worn to play this position.
- Players should rotate positions at least every game.
- 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 within 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 3rd full week of games is complete:
 - Teams will play fielding outs (except infield-flies).
 - Outs shall be called by the head coach or assistant coach, whichever 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 (recall this is AA softball). Opposing coaches should accept the decision and not argue (see Conflict Resolution).
 - Even though outs are played, the innings will not end at 3 outs, they will end when every batter has batted.
 - The infield-fly rule DOES NOT apply until 11U in most jurisdictions, and will not apply here. 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, 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:
 - 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).

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- If there is an overthrow at a base, the runner may advance a maximum of one base.
 - 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 5th full week of games is complete:
 - Teams will end the inning 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.
 - Batters will be out after five (5) 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, baserunners, 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 USA Softball Rules: <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball>

