

## EYSA Rules Grades 4-5 as of 1-25-10

Games – All games will have a maximum of five (5) innings. The home team will furnish the game ball and sit on the third base side.

Uniforms – Players must wear their team jersey to all games. Team jerseys may not be altered in any way. Sleeves may not be cut off and jerseys may not be shortened to midriff. If a player alters her jersey and wants to play in future games, she is responsible for the cost of having the jersey reprinted. Players are encouraged to provide some form of protection for safe sliding: sweatpants, long athletic socks, sliding pads (“sliders”), baseball pants, etc. Also, all jewelry must be removed prior to game time.

Minimum numbers of players – To play a game, there must be at least 5 rostered players. If a team has only 5 or 6 players, a coach may play catcher. The catching coach may not participate in any fielding plays. The coaches can delay the game for up to ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time. If after ten minutes, five players are not present, the game is forfeited. The teams are encouraged to play a scrimmage game.

Batting – Coaches must rotate the batting order each game so the players have equal batting time. All the players bat the entire game regardless of which innings they play in the field. The batting order remains the same throughout the game. If a player arrives late they will be added at the end of batting order. Coaches should notify the opposing coach as players arrive or leave early. Helmets are required for batters and base runners (players may provide their own helmet if desired). Only official softball bats and 11” size softballs may be used. No intentional bunting allowed. The infield fly rule does not apply.

Pitching – EYSA adopts the 3-2 count for balls and strikes plus one “courtesy” foul. Players will pitch to the batters. At this grade level there will be no walks, however strike-outs will be enforced. After the third “ball” is thrown, the batting tee will be positioned on home plate. A batter will be given one swing to hit the ball in play. If the batter misses the ball, hits a foul, or hits the tee instead, the batter will be called out. Players who wish to pitch must demonstrate their ability to throw strikes to their coach. Coaches should have interested players practice their pitching before they are offered the chance to pitch in a game. Pitchers who are struggling to throw strikes should be substituted in an effort to keep the game moving and placed into another position (preferably at the end of the inning for 3rd and 4th grade). All players are not expected to have equal playing time at the pitching position. A pitcher may not pitch for more than three innings in a game unless the team only has one or two pitchers available at game time. EYSA encourages the umpires to have a wide strike zone to promote hitting and reduce walks. Hittable balls that land on the plate may be called strikes. If the umpires are not calling a wide strike zone, head coaches are asked to politely remind the umpire of the rule. The pitching distance is 35 feet. Before (and only before) July 4th, struggling pitchers may pitch from 30 feet.

Fielding – A maximum of ten (10) players will play in the field. Players, not adults, will field all positions (unless an adult catcher is utilized as described in the previous section). Free substitution is allowed and players can come in and out of the field in any inning at any position. All players must play at least three innings in the field. Coaches must rotate players’ fielding positions to provide fair and equal time at different positions (with the exception of the pitching position). A player may not play the same position for more than three innings during a game. Coaches should position their players at “real” positions. Outfielders may play shallow, but they should not be positioned in the infield. Outfielders’ heels must be on the grass. The catcher must wear a facemask and chest protector.

Overthrows – Runners may advance one base on each overthrow. Multiple bases may be advanced on multiple overthrows. Players should learn not to throw the ball excessively enabling overthrows.

Base Running -- When a player has control of the ball in the infield, the base runner may only advance to the upcoming base. No base stealing or leading off base. Sliding is permitted (feet first slides are recommended since head first slides are more susceptible to injuries.) The base distance is 45 feet.

Scoring – Five (5) run limit per inning for grades 3-4. This applies to all innings regardless of the score. Coaches should keep track of the score but the league will not track the final score or wins/losses.

Practice swings – Practice swings are allowed by the batter in the “on deck” circle (all other players must stay behind the

fence). When the players reach the batter's box, she can also ask the umpire to allow a practice swing before entering the box. Practice swings are also allowed using the "strike zone" equipment (preferably by the batter "in the hole"). If a "strike zone" is used, a parent should be assigned the position of overseeing the area. Proper supervision is vital to insure safety.

Coaches – The fielding team's coach may be in the field to instruct and encourage the players during May and June only. To prepare for the tournament, a coach is not allowed on the field in July. Also, the batting team coaches are encouraged to stand near the 1st and 3rd bases to instruct runners. Coaches must not touch base runners, interfere with play, or cause any unnecessary delays.

Umpire authority – Any discussion with the umpire **MUST** be conducted in a calm, respectful manner by the head coach. Coaches, parents or players may not call or influence the call of the play. **THE UMPIRE HAS THE POWER, IF NECESSARY, TO EJECT ANY UNRULY PLAYER OR COACH AND/OR FORFEIT THE GAME.**

Playoff eligibility – Only players who have played in at least five regular season games are eligible for tournament games.

Official USSSA Slow Pitch Rules apply except as noted above. (For a copy of the rules, go to <http://www.ussa.com/ussa/ussa-general/2006SPRuleBook.pdf>.)