

Audubon Recreation Association

Softball Rules and Goals

This handbook is designed to be a guide for present and future members of the AUDUBON RECREATION ASSOCIATION (ARA).

The Philosophy, objectives, procedural statements and other information contribute to the smooth operation of the ARA SOFTBALL LEAGUE.

No handbook could possibly provide all the answers to all the Softball League questions, but familiarity with this manual, along with good judgment should help in making good decisions for the League.

All items in this handbook are subject to revision periodically. Ideas for improvements are encouraged at any time. The various chapters in this manual deal with all facets of our league operation. Any part of this manual shall be considered the "rules" of the ARA SOFTBALL program and should be adhered to accordingly.

PHILOSOPHY

Audubon Recreation Association (ARA) exists to provide a safe, enjoyable environment for children to learn the great game of Softball. The safety and wellbeing of young players is the primary objective of ARA. The league's goal is to teach Softball skills so the players can improve and develop satisfaction and enjoyment of the game, and also values such as sportsmanship, teamwork, and service that will enable them to improve as individuals and give back to the community.

GENERAL RULES – ALL LEVELS (Regular Season)

1. Babe Ruth Softball rules apply unless specifically excepted in this document.
2. ARA is a RECREATIONAL league. The intensity in a Softball game should never reach a level that detracts from the basic rules of good sportsmanship and fair play.
3. All Managers must conduct their program in a manner that ensures the safety of each player.
4. All Managers and Coaches must have completed the required ARA Background check before being able to coach at any level. The link to the Protect Youth Sports website can be found on the ARA web site. Background checks are good for one year from the date of issue.
5. Managers are responsible for keeping their coaches, players, and partisan spectators under control, observing good etiquette, and exhibiting sportsmanlike conduct at all practices and games.
6. Managers will conduct a mandatory team meeting involving players and parents at the first practice so that expectations are clearly communicated. At this meeting Managers and coaches should make clear the rules of good conduct with all parents.
7. Managers are responsible to have the best interest of the PLAYER in mind at all times.
8. Managers will provide all players with a game schedule once the League has approved the schedule. The Softball Commissioner and League Coordinator will develop a practice schedule that is fair to all teams.
9. Only Managers, coaches, scorekeepers, players, umpires, and League officials are permitted in the dugout during a game.

10. Base coaches must remain in the coach's box when their team is at bat and in dug out behind the fence when their team is in the field.
11. Hitting sticks are not permitted at the ARA complex at any time.
12. Managers, coaches, and parents are responsible for limiting the communication and items passed during the games to the players while on the team benches and playing field. This includes food, drinks, and conversation between players, parents, and siblings. The goal is to offer encouragement with the least amount of distractions.
13. Only the Manager may question an umpire's ruling and such cases are limited to rule interpretations only. A judgment call of an umpire should never be questioned. The Manager shall not allow any coaches, players, or parents to question or harass an umpire in any way. The Manager may never leave the dugout or coach's box to talk to an umpire, without first receiving the umpire's permission. ARA is a RECREATIONAL league. The intensity in a Softball game should never reach a level that detracts from the basic rules of good sportsmanship.
14. Protests are not allowed during the regular season. During the playoffs, protests are allowed for rule interpretations only. The umpire and the Softball Commissioner (or his designate) will resolve the protest BEFORE play resumes. Judgment calls are not subject to protest.
15. Managers, players, coaches, and spectators shall not behave improperly or use abusive language. The penalty for this behavior is:
 - a. First Occurrence – Automatic ejection from the game.
 - b. Second Occurrence – Automatic ejection from the game PLUS suspension for the next game.
 - c. Ejection from the league for the year.

Any ejection can be appealed to the ARA Board of Directors or their designate, with the player, Manager/Coaches, and umpire attending. The decision is final and not subject to further appeal.
16. For the safety of the players and umpires, the intentional throwing of any equipment is prohibited. Managers should teach their players the proper way to drop the bat after hitting the ball. Penalties for throwing of equipment are at the umpire's discretion, up to ejection for repeat offenses.
17. When coaching and/or umpiring clinics are offered, attendance by ALL Managers and coaches is strongly recommended. Attendance at such clinics will be consideration for future-coaching positions at all levels.
18. **Managers and coaches should strive to make playing time as equal as possible for all players on the team during the regular season.** During the regular season, each player must play four (4) innings in the field, unless:
 1. The game is shortened due to weather or darkness.
 2. A player arrives late or leaves early.
19. During regular season games all players should be given the opportunity to play the infield and outfield in each game. **All players should be given the opportunity to play the infield for at least 2 innings each regular season game.**
20. There are no intentional walks.
21. Games in the Minors and, Majors will consist of six (6) innings. The Senior Division will play seven (7) innings. During the regular season, there will be no extra innings in case of a tie. Tie games will not be replayed. Games are considered official after four (4) full innings, or 3 ½ if the Home team is ahead. The league will attempt to reschedule games that are not official during the regular season

based on field availability. The Instructional leagues will play as many innings as the allotted time permits or as warranted considering other factors (e.g. weather) given the ages of the players.

22. In the event of inclement weather or lack of daylight, the League may suspend play. If the League has not suspended play, the Managers and Umpires will use their discretion on whether or not to play, with the player's safety in mind.
23. Only the Softball Commissioner or his designate may cancel a game for reasons other than weather.
24. The League Coordinator will reschedule cancelled and unofficial games, with priority given to cancelled games. Games will be rescheduled based on field availability. The League reserves the right to not reschedule a game if fields are unavailable. Rescheduled games will be replayed in their entirety.
25. Pitching limits of unofficial or tie games count toward league weekly allotments.
26. The umpire will notify both teams of the official time of the first pitch. If there is a game following the current game, there is a one-hour forty-five minute time limit on the game (1:45). Once the time limit has been reached, the current inning (top and bottom halves, if home team is trailing or tied) may be completed without regard to the time limit. However, no new inning may begin after the time limit has been reached.

Example: Team A (home) and Team B begin at 1:01 PM. Teams C and D are scheduled to play at 3:00 PM. At 2:46 PM, the time limit is reached in the top of the 5th inning and Team B leading. The game will end after the bottom of the 5th inning.
27. All players present must bat consecutively. All players must play at least half the game in the field. A manager may sit a player for disciplinary reasons but must report the incident to the Softball Commissioner before the next scheduled game. Players arriving late will be put last in the batting order.
28. Each Manager will supply a copy of his batting order, consisting of player's last name and number, to the opposing manager. Managers must keep scorebooks that include player's first and last names and numbers and return to league commissioner once season has ended. This is important administrative matter in order to support the eligibility of players for the travel season. .
29. The home team will occupy the third base dugout.
30. Players in the field and on the bench are encouraged to "chatter" to support their teammates. However, "chatter" should not distract the batter nor be derogatory to the opposing team in any way. Chatter while a pitcher is in her motion is not permitted.
31. Catchers may catch the entire game, but Managers should attempt to utilize more than one catcher in a game whenever possible, especially on hot days.
32. If a pitcher throws one pitch in an inning and is removed from the mound for any reason, she is considered to have pitched one inning. There are no thirds of an inning when calculating pitched innings.
33. If a pitcher hits two batters in a game she will receive a warning. If a pitcher hits another batter in that game (total of 3), the pitcher can be removed from the mound for that game at the umpire's discretion.
34. A Manager or coach is permitted to make one trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher. On the second trip in the same inning to the same pitcher, that pitcher must be removed

from the mound for the entire game. However, if a pitcher is injured, the Manager may notify the umpire that he is visiting the mound to check the injury and he will not be charged with a visit.

35. Pitchers must pitch from the pitching rubber.
36. Any player warming up a pitcher, whether on the field or on the sidelines, must wear a glove and protective mask.
37. MANDATORY NO CONTACT RULE (Slide or Surrender): During the first few weeks of the regular season (until May 1st), if a runner does not slide and makes no effort to avoid contact with the player making the play, the umpire can use their discretion and issue a warning the runner as opposed to declaring the runner out. A second offense will result in the runner being declared out. Subsequent to April 30th, a runner will automatically be declared out if a runner does not slide and makes no effort to avoid contact with the player making the play.
38. Headfirst slides are not permitted unless diving back into a base that a runner has successfully reached. Any runner making a headfirst slide will be declared out. Repeat offenses by any player in the same game will result in the ejection of that player.
39. Players are not permitted to coach at first or third base.
40. Only the on-deck batter is permitted in the designated on-deck area. All other players must remain on the bench when not in the field, on the bases, or at bat. Players may not swing bats in any other area.
41. A fielding glove, batting glove, approved batting helmet with facemask, and bat(s) is the only personal equipment a player can use, except the catcher. If a catcher has his own equipment, she may use it as long as it is considered "normal" catcher's equipment.
42. To speed up play, Managers are encouraged to use a courtesy runner for their catcher when:
 1. The next inning's catcher is on base, and
 2. There are two outs.

Courtesy runners are not permitted in any other instances except in the case of injury.
The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last batted out.

43. Call Up Players – The call up program allows short-handed teams to play with a full team and exposes younger players to a higher level of play. As such, calling up a player should not be used as a mechanism to improve a team. The League Coordinators in the Instructional 8U, Minors, and Majors will identify a pool of higher-skilled players that will be available for temporary use by short-handed teams. This list will be distributed to the Managers and League Coordinator of the higher leagues. Managers may call up a player or players from a lower league to bring his/her team up to 10 players. Call up players can not play up if their regular team has a scheduled game. Call up players are subject to the same playing time provisions as regular players with the following exceptions:
 1. Call up players may NOT pitch.
 2. Call up players may only play two innings in the infield, including catcher.
 3. Call up players must bat at the bottom of the batting order.
 4. Call up players cannot play more than a rostered player (a rostered player cannot sit a 3rd inning if a call up has only sat 2 innings)

The Softball Commissioner reserves the right to review and appropriately address any use of the call up rules deemed inconsistent with the intent of the rule.

44. A team may only score five (5) runs in an inning (See Minors rules below for exceptions). Once the fifth run in the inning has scored, the half-inning is declared over. This rule does NOT apply in the sixth inning or extra innings. This rule applies to all leagues.
45. After the completion of the fifth inning, if either team is ahead by 10 or more runs, the game will be declared over.
46. Players may not wear any jewelry or non-Softball headwear. However, a player may tape a medical emergency tag or religious medallion to their body.
47. The home team is responsible for bringing any necessary equipment (e.g. pitching machine) to the field and preparing the field before the game (lining and dragging the field, etc.). The visiting team is responsible for retuning equipment (and locking the relevant shed) and for raking the field after the game. Both teams must return any League batting helmets to the storage box after the game, and must ensure that the storage box is locked. Both teams must clear their dugout area of litter and police the field after the game.
48. Alcoholic Beverages are not permitted at ARA Premises.
49. Tobacco products are not permitted on the playing field or in the dugout.
50. All players in ARA Softball are required to play in the league for which they are age-appropriate as defined by Babe Ruth Softball. The only exception to this rule are players are 8 year old players who made the 8U all-star team the year before as a 7 year old or a 10 year old player who made the 10U team as a 9 year old. In both of these cases, approval is still required from the Softball Commissioner in order to play up. Any other exceptions require the approval of the Softball Commissioner.
51. The Softball Commissioner's approval, in consultation with the Board of Directors, is required for players to play below their age-appropriate league (playing down).

ADDITIONAL PLAYOFF RULES (Minors, Majors & Seniors)

1. Playoffs will not be held in the Instructional leagues.
2. Playoffs will be in a double-elimination format. All teams are eligible for the playoffs. The Softball Commissioner or his designate will conduct the playoff draw. The home team will be determined by a coin flip, except for the first game of the championship, where the winner's bracket team will be the home team.
3. During the playoffs all games must be played to completion (no ties). If the home team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 3 ½ innings, or if the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs after the 4th or later innings, and both teams have had an equal number of at bats, the game is over.
4. Games may be suspended due to darkness or weather conditions. Suspended games will be resumed at the exact point they left off, the next day if at all possible. The game is resumed exactly at the point it was suspended as if the suspension never occurred. All pitching limitations remain in effect. Playoff games that are dependent on the outcome of a suspended game will be played immediately following the conclusion of the game unless otherwise decided by the softball commissioner.
5. If a playoff game is tied after six full innings the game, international tie breaker rules will be used.

6. Teams must bat at least ten (10) players. If a team only has nine (9) players, the first spot in the order is an automatic out and everyone else bats in order 2 – 10. If a team only has eight (8) players, the game is a FORFEIT. If both teams only have nine players this rule is waived.
7. Call-up players are permitted in the playoffs only to avoid forfeits or to reach the minimum of ten (10) players. A team may only call up the same player once during the playoffs. Any exceptions must be approved by the Softball Commissioner or his/her designee. The playing time rules for call up players are the same as in the regular season. The Softball Commissioner reserves the right to review and appropriately address any use of the call up rules deemed inconsistent with the intent of the rule.
8. All pitching limits re-set at the commencement of playoffs.
9. No player may sit more than 2 consecutive innings in the field, except in the case of injury or an extra-inning game.
10. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings in the playoffs, unless:
 - a. The game is shortened due to weather or darkness.
 - b. A player arrives late or leaves early.

FIVE & SIX YEAR OLD INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION

1. This division is a child's first exposure to organized Softball. The program is designed to introduce children to the basic concepts of Softball in a fun and stress-free environment. Teams will play one or two games per week; practices will be limited given the age of the children.
2. Games are scheduled for 90 minutes maximum fitting in as many innings as is reasonable during the allotted time. Coaches are encouraged to use the first 45 minutes as teaching sessions. The remaining time should be used for the game. After Mother's Day, coaches are permitted to practice for 30 minutes and play a game for 60 minutes. Games should continue to be used as a teaching mechanism given the age of the children.
3. A 10-inch RIF (Reduced Injury Factor) ball or Incrediball will be used for all practices and games.
4. Managers should strive to teach their players the following basic skills and concepts:
 - Softball positions
 - Proper batting stance and level swing
 - Base running – running through first base and home plate and to second base and third base.
 - Proper Throwing technique – proper arm position, leg drive and follow through. "Step, throw, touch your toe."
 - Catching – catch with two hands. Fingers point up on ball above the waist; fingers point down on balls below the waist.
 - Fielding ground balls – Knees bent, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width, glove down and slightly in front of the body (scoop some dirt).
5. During games, all players present will bat each inning. Managers are encouraged to rotate the batting order each inning so each player has equal opportunity to bat first and bat last.
6. For the at least the first half of the season (until Mother's Day) each batter should hit from the tee; with flexibility based on players' skill levels as well as discussion between opposing coaches. The goal is to teach proper hitting mechanics and fundamentals. For the second half of the season each

batter will receive five hittable pitches from the coach. If after the fifth pitch the ball has not been put in play, the batter must hit from a tee. A pitch limit should, at any time, be discussed between opposing coaches and be strictly enforced to ensure the game moves along.

7. Except for the last batter, batter/runners and runners shall advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield. On the last batter, all runners will circle the bases.

8. On defense, only five (5) players are permitted in the infield: pitcher's mound, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Remaining players should spread out in the outfield. Managers should instruct their players when it is appropriate to pursue a ball. The third-baseman should not run after a ball hit into right field. Managers should rotate positions each inning and ensure each player has equal opportunity to play each position. The position of catcher can be filled depending on available players, and discussion between opposing coaches.

SEVEN & EIGHT YEAR OLD INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION

1. The 7 & 8 YEAR OLD Instructional League is a bridge between the introductory 5/6 year old division and the competitive leagues. As the season progresses, players in this division will be introduced to a more competitive environment. However, Managers are encouraged to continue developing the basic skills learned in the 6U Instructional league while introducing new concepts such as outs.

2. Games in this Division are scheduled one and a half hours.

3. An 11-inch standard softball shall be used.

4. Batter/runners and runners should advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield. Coaches should not attempt to advance a runner at this level of play taking advantage of the age and skill level of the players.

5. All batters present will bat each inning. Managers are encouraged to rotate the batting order each game so each player has bats in each batting order position an equal number of times.

6. The "dropped third strike" rule shall not apply during any segment of the game.

7. The infield fly rule is not in effect.

8. Stealing is not permitted at any time.

9. A pitching machine and player pitch (with coach pitch assistance as described below) will be used. The pitching machine will be used for throughout the season. The pitcher must use underhand or windmill type motion, as described in the Babe Ruth Softball Rule Book. The pitching distance will be 32 feet from the front of the pitching rubber/stripe to the back of home plate.

Additional rules during the machine portion of the game include:

- A coach from the hitting team will feed the pitching machine and make all calls. A batter will receive up to three hittable pitches (a hittable pitch is from just below the batter's chin to her mid-shin and slightly wider than home plate). Pitches that are not hittable will be called "no pitch" by

the coach and will not count towards the three hittable pitches. If a player fouls off the third hittable pitch, she will receive additional hittable pitches until she has: hit the ball in fair territory; swung and missed at the final hittable pitch; or did not swing at the final hittable pitch.

If the batter does not get a hit after 3 hittable machine pitches, the coach will then pitch three hittable pitches. If the batter does not get a hit after six pitches then a tee can be used.

- Strikeouts and walks are not permitted before Mother's Day. Before Mother's Day, if a player does not put the ball into play after the full allotment of hittable pitches, the batting tee shall be used. After Mother's Day, if a player does not put the ball into play after the full allotment of hittable pitches, the player shall be declared out.
 - A dead ball is immediately called when a batted ball hits the pitching machine. The batter is awarded a single and all runners advance one base.
 - When fielding, the pitcher must remain behind or to the side of the pitching machine and no closer than eight (8) feet of the machine until the ball is put in play, but outside of the circle around the pitching machine.
 - Batters must take full swings. No bunting is allowed
 - **Before Mother's Day**, the pitching machine and coach pitch will be used for all six innings
 - **After Mother's Day**, the first three innings the pitching machine will be used. Each player will receive six "hittable" pitches. If they do not get a hit, they will sit but will not be counted as an out. No tee will be used
 - Innings 4,5, and 6 will consist of girls practicing pitching. The pitcher will get 3 pitches to every batter. Strikes can be called, during the three pitches. After the third pitch the coach will step in (strikes will carry over) and throw three hittable pitches (foul ball on third pitch keeps batter alive)
 - If a girl does not get a hit by the third pitch she will sit and it will be recorded as an out
 - Inning will end with three outs or five runs (whichever comes first)
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- Pitchers may pitch a maximum of two innings in a game. One of goals of this league is to promote pitching for all players. Coaches should give all players who wish to pitch the opportunity to try to pitch. However, coaches should use good judgment based on how the players perform during practice (e.g., they should be somewhat able to pitch within the strike zone, if they cannot, the player should probably not pitch and should be encouraged to keep practicing).
 - Both feet must be in contact with the rubber/stripe to start the pitch. One foot must remain in contact with ground (toe drag) until ball is released.

10. A play will be declared over once the ball is in control in the infield. Coaches should not take advantage of the lack of skill of players at this age and send players to the next base simply to advance a runner. **A good general rule of thumb is "if the players in the field were of an advanced age and skill such that you normally would not consider sending the runner, then don't send her".**

11. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine and the visiting team is responsible for putting it away.

12. Outs will be tracked. For the first half of the season (until Mother's Day), after three outs are recorded, the bases will be cleared but the hitting team will remain at bat until all players have batted. Subsequent to Mother's Day, after 3 outs, the opposing team will come up to bat.

13. Batter/runners and runners should advance one base at a time, unless the ball is cleanly hit into the outfield.

14. Each team will field ten players. Defensively, only six (6) players are permitted in the infield: pitcher's mound, catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Remaining players should spread out in the outfield – no short fielder is allowed behind second base. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass at least 10 feet beyond the infield dirt. Managers should instruct their players when it is appropriate to pursue a ball.

15. Coaches should teach the concept of “backing up” and should discourage players running after a ball (e.g., the third-baseman should not run after a ball hit into left field). Players should be taught the “Ball, Base, Backup” principle – players should do one of these on each play. If a player cannot make a play on the ball, they should cover a base. If the player cannot cover a base, they should backup the fielder or a base.

16. Managers should rotate positions each inning and ensure each player has equal opportunity to play each position.

MINOR LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. An 11-inch softball shall be used
2. The infield fly rule is not in effect.
3. Bunting is allowed only off of girl pitch (not machine). However, once a batter "shows" bunt, the batter cannot take a full swing at the pitch. The batter must bunt or take the pitch. If the batter "shows" bunt and then swings, the batter will be declared out and a dead ball will be called.
4. Stealing of all bases is allowed. A runner stealing a base may not advance on an overthrow – the player stealing the base must stop at the base being stolen. A team may only steal home once per inning. Players may leave the base after release of the ball from the pitcher, or after the ball is dropped in the pitching machine. A runner caught leaving early after a warning in the same inning will be called out.
5. A play will be declared over once the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitcher's circle. Runners must have achieved at least $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance to their next base when play is stopped to earn the additional base. The call is made in the umpire's judgment and is not subject to appeal. During the regular season, coaches should not take advantage of the lack of skill of players at this age and send players to the next base simply to advance a runner. **A good general rule of thumb is “if the players in the field were of an advanced age and skill such that you normally would not consider sending the runner, then don't send her”.**
6. With the exception of the pitching position, free substitution is allowed.
7. A pitching machine will be used for the first two innings (maximum of 5 runs per inning) and a pitcher will pitch the remaining innings (maximum of 3 runs per inning, except the 6th inning, if reached, will have unlimited runs). During machine pitching (where the machine will be fed by the coach of the hitting team) each batter will get five hittable pitches from the pitching machine to put the ball in play. If after the fifth hittable pitch from the machine, the ball has not been put in play, the batter will be declared out. The batter will also be called out when they swing and miss on the third strike. A dead ball is immediately called when a batted ball hits the machine. The batter is awarded a single and all runners advance one base.
8. If the batter swings regardless of a no-pitch call, the pitch is a strike.
9. If 5th pitch is fouled off batter will get additional hittable pitches until the ball is put in play or the batter strikes out. If a hittable pitch occurs after the 5th hittable pitch and the batter does not swing, they will be declared out.
10. During player pitch segment of the game, normal softball rules regarding balls and strikes will be in effect with the exceptions set forth in section 11 and 12 below.
11. An expanded strike zone will be used at the discretion of the umpire. This especially applies during the beginning of the season. Players should be encouraged to swing at hittable pitches.
12. Runners may be forced home on a walk.
13. The pitcher re-entry rule shall apply. A pitcher may re-enter a game one time as a pitcher under the following conditions:

- She must be the starting pitcher, and
 - She must be eligible to pitch.
14. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of three innings in a game and four innings in any two consecutive games. Innings pitched include games rained out or otherwise interrupted.
 15. If a pitcher pitches one ball and then is removed from the mound for any reason, the pitcher will be credited for one full inning pitched towards her allotment.
 16. The pitcher must use the underhand or windmill type motion, as described in the Babe Ruth Softball Rule Book.
 17. Both feet must be in contact with the rubber to start the pitch. One foot must remain in contact with ground (toe drag) until ball is released
 18. The front of the pitching rubber shall be placed 35 feet from the rear of home plate.
 19. Each team will field ten players. The tenth fielder must be positioned in the outfield. When the pitching machine is used, a fielder will be positioned at the pitcher's mound. This fielder must be positioned even with or behind the machine until the ball is put in play (but outside of the circle around the machine). Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass at least 10 feet beyond the infield dirt.
 20. The "dropped third strike" rule shall not apply.
 21. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine and the visiting team is responsible for putting it away.
 22. If a base runner makes contact with a defensive player who, in the judgment of the umpire, is in the act of making a play and the base runner is not sliding, the base runner shall be called out. A dead ball shall be called. The intent of this rule is to protect the fielder and runner from a collision. Coaches should be teaching the players how to slide properly. Coaches should not look to have a player called out simply because a player does not slide and there was no real close play at the base.

MAJOR LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. A 12-inch softball shall be used.
2. The infield fly rule is in effect.
3. **Dropped 3rd strike is in effect.** Catchers must catch the third strike when first base is not occupied with less than two outs or anytime there are two outs.
4. Bunting is allowed. However, once a batter "shows" bunt, the batter cannot take a full swing at the pitch. The batter must bunt or take the pitch. If the batter "shows" bunt and then swings, the batter will be declared out and a dead ball will be called.
5. With the exception of the pitching position, free substitution is allowed.
6. The pitcher re-entry rule shall apply. A pitcher may re-enter a game one time as a pitcher under the following conditions:
 - She must be the starting pitcher, and
 - She must be eligible to pitch, and
 - She must not have been removed because of a second trip to the mound.
7. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of seven innings, in two consecutive games. Innings pitched include games rained out or otherwise interrupted.
8. If a pitcher pitches one ball and then is removed from the mound for any reason, the pitcher will be credited for one full inning pitched towards her allotment.

9. The pitcher must use underhand or windmill type motion, as described in the Babe Ruth Softball Rule Book.
10. A manager or coach must remove a pitcher from the mound on the second trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher.
11. Pitchers must have one foot remain in contact with the ground (toe drag) until the ball is released.
12. The front of the pitching rubber shall be placed 40 from the rear of home plate.
13. Each team will field ten players. The tenth fielder must be positioned in the outfield.
14. Game time limit is 2 hours. No new inning may start after 1:45 hours.
15. Stealing is allowed upon release of the ball by the pitcher.
16. In the first half of the season: a base runner that leaves the base early will be warned once. The umpire will declare a dead ball and the offending runner and all other runners will return to their base. Since a dead ball has been declared, the pitch and any subsequent action will not count. If the same runner receives a second warning, in any one inning, the runner is out.
17. Subsequent to Mother's Day, a base runner leaving the base early will be declared out and a dead ball will be declared out. NO warning will be given.
18. If a base runner makes contact with a defensive player who, in the judgment of the umpire, is in the act of making a play and the base runner is not sliding, the base runner shall be called out. A dead ball shall be called. The intent of this rule is to protect the fielder and runner from a collision. Coaches should be teaching the players how to slide properly. Coaches should not look to have a player called out simply because a player does not slide and there was no real close play at the base.

SENIOR LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. A 12-inch softball shall be used.
2. The infield fly rule is in effect.
3. Bunting is allowed. This includes "slap bunts".
4. Stealing is allowed. However, the base runner may not leave the base until the pitcher releases the ball. If a base runner leaves the base early, the base runner will be declared out and a dead ball is called. Since a dead ball has been declared, the pitch and any subsequent action will not count.
5. With the exception of the pitching position, free substitution is allowed.
6. The pitcher re-entry rule shall apply. A pitcher may re-enter a game one time as a pitcher under the following conditions:
 - She must be the starting pitcher, and
 - She must be eligible to pitch, and
 - She must not have been removed because of a second trip to the mound.
7. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of eight innings in two consecutive games. Innings pitched include games rained out or otherwise interrupted.
8. Substitute players from the Major League can be called up for any game. A call up player cannot play more innings than a rostered senior league player.

9. The front of the pitching rubber shall be placed forty three (43) feet from the rear of home plate.
10. If a base runner makes contact with a defensive player who, in the judgment of the umpire, is in the act of making a play and the base runner is not sliding, the base runner shall be called out. A dead ball shall be called.
11. Each team will field nine players during the regular season. Coaches have the latitude to field a 4th player in the outfield if both agree prior to the start of the game.
12. **Drop 3rd strike is in effect** Catchers must catch the third strike when first base is not occupied with less than two outs or anytime there are two outs.

ALL STAR TEAMS

In-House All Star Game

At the end of the season the League may conduct an in-house all star game in the 8U Instructional, Minor (10U), Major (12U) and Senior leagues (14U/16U). Managers and coaches will select the players to participate in this game. Players who have not been selected for a travel all-star team will be given priority over travel all-stars for the in-house All-Star game.

Travel All Star Teams

ARA is a member of Babe Ruth Softball. Babe Ruth and other local organizations sponsor age-group tournament play following the regular season. The League may extend the opportunity to an 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U and 16U age group to form a competitive all star team to compete in local, district, state, regional and/or national tournaments.

In order to participate on a travel all-star team for Audubon Recreation, you must be fully committed to our organization. This means we expect that all potential travel all-star players to have played in the majority of their ARA Recreational league games in accordance with Babe Ruth league rules. In the event of any dispute, a decision on eligibility will be determined by the ARA Board of Directors. In addition, if a player is chosen to play on an Audubon travel all-star team and that player is on a travel team of another organization including a neighboring Little League organization, that player must be fully committed to ARA. If the player can't fully commit through the whole tournament season she may not be chosen. This includes vacations.

Players choosing to try out for a Travel all star team must acknowledge that:

- Selection to an all star team is an honor. Players, Managers, Coaches, and fans are representing ARA Softball when they are competing.
- If selected for an all star team, playing time on an all star team is not guaranteed. Some players may play little or not at all.
- Each all star team is responsible for its expenses (uniforms, tournaments, travel).
- Parents must sign a commitment letter which includes whether there would be a conflict with another sport, vacation, etc. and must acknowledge that their child is not a member of another organization's travel all-star team. Violation of this commitment will result in a one-year suspension from future all-star play.

All travel all star teams must be approved by the ARA Board.

Travel all-star teams are required to carry a minimum of 12 active players. Up to three alternates can be chosen at the all-star manager's discretion but these players will not be rostered. These alternates can be invited by the all-star manager at his discretion to participate in practices as a developmental opportunity.

Any player "playing up" during the regular REC season is required to play down at their age appropriate level for their respective all-star team. For example, a 10YO playing up in Majors is only eligible to play on the 10U travel all-star team. Similarly, an 8YO playing up in Minors is only eligible to play on the 8U travel all-star team.

Each all-star team may have a maximum of one (1) Manager and two (2) Assistants and a scorekeeper. All Managers and Assistants must be approved by the ARA Board.

Tryouts for the competitive all star teams will be held in April or May for each applicable age group. In order to be considered for an all-star team a player must attend at least one of the tryouts, although it is highly recommended that the player attend all tryouts.

All players in the age group must be invited to the all star team tryouts.

The all star Manager will select the all star team. Selection to the team will be based on a player's performance during the course of the regular season and the all-star tryouts. Previous selection to an all-star team in no way guarantees selection in future years. The all-star manager is encouraged by the ARA Board to solicit feedback from other ARA team managers to be able to fully assess a player's performance during the course of the regular season. While the selection to the all-star team is primarily performance based, the all-star manager has the right to choose "position players" as needed.

Protocol for Player Drafts

1. The goal of each ARA draft process is parity – fair and balanced teams.
2. The pairing of Managers (Head Coaches) and assistant coaches prior to the league drafts is not permitted for Minors, Majors and Seniors.
3. Only Head coaches are permitted at league drafts. Assistant coaches or other designees are permitted only in the absence of the Head Coach and with advance notice to and approval by the Softball Commissioner or his designee.
4. For our Instructional leagues, coaches are required to honor all carpool requests as best as possible. Coaches should keep in mind that this can be an important request for single parents of children in ARA. In the Instructional leagues coaches are permitted to request players based on neighborhoods or elementary school, etc. as long as requests are reasonable and can be agreed by other coaches. Coaches are expected to be flexible such that one coach does not expect to take a majority of kids from a given neighborhood or elementary school. The Softball Commissioner reserves the right to settle any issues that cannot be satisfactorily agreed by the Managers.
5. For Minors, Majors and Seniors, unknown or new players will be assigned by the Softball Commissioner or his/her designee based on draft order after all other known players are selected. Coaches will not be permitted to draft a player who did not participate in player evaluations unless that player's skill level is known and shared with all the coaches.
6. All Drafts will use the serpentine style format. Player assignments for T-Ball and Instructional coaches can be more flexible by simply requesting players.

7. Reaching consensus among the coaches for Minors, Majors and Seniors is important as it relates to the ranking of the Head Coach's kid to determine which round they fall into and that will count for his pick in that round. Any coach whose kid is not a first round pick will draw out of a hat to determine the draft order. An attempt will be made to determine a proper slotting of any coach's kid who is rated as a first round pick (e.g., his kid is 2nd best player in the league so coach gets 2nd pick in first round and his kid falls in that slot). The Softball Commissioner or his/her designee reserves the right to make a final decision on the ranking and draft order.
8. It is important that all players affiliated with a sponsor be clearly identified BEFORE the draft such that only one such player affiliated with a sponsor is selected for each team.
9. There should be an attempt to split up pitchers and catchers equitably for the Minors, Majors and Senior Leagues. The Softball Commissioner or his/her designee will ask for input in advance from a selection of coaches to identify the top pitchers and catchers such that this information can be shared with all coaches prior to the draft.
10. All players must be contacted by the coach within 48 hours of the draft if nothing else to let them know their team assignment and that more information will be forthcoming. Roster information about teams will be posted if possible.
11. League coordinators are responsible for providing the Softball Commissioner with an updated spreadsheet of all players chosen by team within 48 hours of the drafts including Instructional and T-Ball leagues.
12. Coaches are responsible for providing the Softball Commissioner or his/her designee with the required roster information in the specified format by March 31st at the latest.