



Saginaw Little League – P.O. Box 6206, Saginaw, MI 48608

## Machine Pitch Softball Division Local Rules

### Overview

The Machine Pitch division is an *instructional* division. The overall objective is to develop a player's core skills (hitting, fielding, throwing, base running and overall baseball knowledge) in a fun environment. It is important that the players enjoy themselves and develop so that they continue to play in future years.

For 2026, we will be leveraging "Rapid Baseball" rule sets to help speed up the game, create more player engagement and help build skills. Your feedback is important to this process – please reach out to [playeragent@saginawll.com](mailto:playeragent@saginawll.com) and/or [president@saginawll.com](mailto:president@saginawll.com) with your feedback.

### I. General Rules

1. Rapid Baseball Level 1 will be used with the following adjustments.
  - a. <https://www.rapidbaseball.org/rules>
2. Games shall last 4 innings. Both teams will play offense in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
  - a. No new inning shall be started after 1 hour 30 minutes has elapsed. The in-progress inning shall be completed.
  - b. The visiting team will start the game playing offense for 10 minutes.
    - i) After 3 outs are recorded, the bases are cleared but continue playing offense until 10 minutes has elapsed.
    - ii) After the 10 minutes expire, the half-inning ends.
3. Catchers will catch and set pitched balls to the side.
  - a. A bucket of balls will be used to maintain pace of play.
  - b. Catchers must wear appropriate equipment including a catcher's mitt and protective cup.
4. No score will be kept for the games.
5. Defensive substitution is unlimited.
  - a. All players must sit out a defensive half-inning once before any player sits out a second defensive half-inning.
6. Each player must play at least **three (3)** innings per complete game.
7. Each player must play at least **two (2)** innings in the infield.
8. The manager and up to **three (3)** coaches may be in the dugout for games. Coaches must be approved by the Board of Directors following the Manager/Coach selection policy.
9. Base coaches must be adults.
10. Managers and coaches may not touch base runners while the ball is in play.
  - a. **EXCEPTION:** In the event of an injury managers/coaches are to attend to the injured player immediately.
  - b. Coaches shall declare an immediate dead-ball to allow for attention to the injured player.
  - c. The batter/runner will be awarded first base if the ball was in fair territory when the injury occurred, and all runners shall be granted 1 base.
11. **No umpires will be provided.** The offensive base coaches and coach operating the pitching machine shall call safe/out.
12. Managers must exchange batting lineups with both names and numbers before each game.
13. The home team playing the last game of the day shall rake the dirt surfaces, and putting all equipment away, including returning the league bats to the board member on duty.
14. The visiting team shall empty the dugout trash cans and sweep out the dugouts.
15. Managers, coaches and spectators may not use artificial noisemakers, including but not limited to: air horns, bells, thunder sticks, vuvuzelas, etc.

## II. Pitching Machine Rules

1. Each batter will be allowed **five (5)** pitches. If a batter has not hit the ball fair within those **five (5)** pitches, a coach will throw a ball into play and the batter will run as though the ball was hit.
  - a. Players fouling the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, can continue to try to hit the ball fair until they are successful or swing and miss on the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch.
  - b. Fielders will try to make an out as they would with a batted ball.
  - c. The objective is to have as many players hit each half inning as possible.
2. The pitcher must have at least **one (1)** foot in the dirt of pitcher's circle until the ball crosses home plate or is put into play.
3. The pitching machine shall be placed with the rear foot touching, but not on, the pitching plate on the pitcher's mound.
4. The pitching machine shall use the "3" setting on the power pedal. The release adjustments shall be agreed upon by the managers before the start of the game. Once set, they may not be changed without agreement from both managers and the umpire.
  - a. If no agreement may be reached between managers, the 2 release point settings will be set to "3".

## III. Offensive Rules

1. Each player must bat in order, regardless of if they are fielding a defensive position.
2. No bunting. Players must attempt to take full swings. Batters that square to bunt will be called out, and the ball will be dead, returning any runners to their original position.
3. No leading off or base stealing. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is put into play. Teams will be issued 1 warning on the first offense, with the runners returning to their original positions, subsequent infractions will result in the runner being declared out.
4. The infield fly rule shall not be used.
5. Base runners must slide, feet first only, when there is a play at the base.
  - a. Headfirst slides will result in runners being called out.
6. Runners may advance 1 base, at their own risk, on an overthrow.
  - a. Additional overthrows on a play may not result in further advancement.
  - b. Overthrows to the pitcher to reach a dead ball situation are not eligible for advancement.
7. Throwing the bat shall result in the following penalties:
  - a. First offense: warning issued to the player and coach
  - b. Second offense: player shall be called out and a warning issued to the team.
  - c. Subsequent thrown bats by any player on that team shall be called out.

## IV. Defensive Rules

1. The **three (3)** outfield players must be **ten (10)** feet behind the infield dirt area before the ball is put into play.
2. Defensive players with both feet on a base on a **close play** shall be called for interference and the runner shall be awarded the base.
3. Defensive players on first base that have both feet on the base shall **always** be called for interference and the hitter/runner shall be awarded first base.
4. **No defensive coaches shall be on the field inside fair territory.**
5. Players on the bench should go outside the dugout to practice pitching (20-25 pitches) with the coach(es).
  - i) Players struggling the throw and catch should start with playing catch until they can reasonably throw a 46' distance.