

St. Thomas Optimist Softball

ATOM DIVISION (U7/U9) - RULES FOR REGULAR SEASON - UPDATED 2025

GENERAL

1. Emphasis is to be placed on learning the fundamentals of the sport, good sportsmanship, and having fun.
2. Unless otherwise specified, all rules are those recognized by Softball Ontario

DIAMOND SETUP

3. Diamonds will be prepped by City Staff ahead of Games
4. Coaches are responsible for placing bases into sleeves before the game (first coach to arrive)
5. "Home" team coach is responsible for returning bases to equipment bins after each game

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

6. Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Registered Volunteers must have a current cleared Police Record, Vulnerable Sector check on file with STOS in order to be allowed in the team dugout or to directly assist a player other than their own during a game or other STOS event
7. Parents and other casual volunteers are welcome to assist their own players when needed, and can help the coach by base coaching or scorekeeping without registering first with STOS

UMPIRES

8. Jr Peewee level players will be assigned as Umpires for each game
9. Umpire cards are to be signed by the Home Team coach, even if the game is forfeited

SCORE REPORTING

10. Scores are to be kept by each team in the score books provided and in the TeamLinkt App
11. Scores are to be reported by the Home Team after each game
12. During the regular season a tied game remains tied - only tournament games are played out
13. If games are rained out after at least 45 minutes of play, the score recorded will be the score as of the last complete inning.

PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

14. A maximum of 10 defensive players will be allowed on the field. Teams must have a minimum of 7 defensive players on the field
15. If a team has less than 7 players the game is forfeited and recorded as a 1-0 Loss
16. In case of forfeits, the players may be shared across teams and a fun scrimmage or practice can take place on the field - umpire is to stay and assist as needed

CALL-UPS/CALL OVERS

17. Players from the division below (Timbit) may be called up to a maximum of 10 players on the bench
18. Players from the same division (Atom) may be called over up to a maximum of 10 players on the bench - called over players must be pulled from a team not scheduled to play
19. Players who have been called up or over must wear their own team shirts and follow all Atom rules

GAME TIME / INNING LIMITS

20. No innings will begin after 75 minutes from the start of the game.
21. Maximum of 7 innings to be played per game
22. Umpire may call last inning at their discretion but is not required to do so
23. Every inning has a six-run limit for both teams.

RAIN OUTS

- 24. Games rained out before 45 minutes of play will be rescheduled.
- 25. Rained out games will be rescheduled by the League Executive
- 26. Any rained out games that are not rescheduled prior to the Final Tournament will be recorded as a tie

PITCHING

- 27. Coaches or volunteers will pitch to their own batters for the entirety of the season
- 28. Players may pitch to their own batters in a practice or scrimmage game
- 29. Player pitchers must wear a fielding mask and use an underhand pitching style - no windmill pitching
- 30. All pitchers must pitch from within the pitching circle and from the rubber mound
- 31. Pitchers must start with both feet together and facing home plate, one step is allowed - jumping is not permitted - one foot must remain on the ground until the ball has left their hand

BATTING

- 32. Each batter will face a maximum of 5 pitches. Strikes and balls are not recorded.
- 33. If the batter does not hit a fair ball within 5 pitches they will be called Out.
- 34. The umpire will count pitches and announce when the batter is on their last pitch

BASE RUNNING

- 35. Stealing bases is not allowed, batter and runners may only advance after a fair ball is hit
- 36. Batters and base runners may advance a maximum of two bases when a fair ball is hit to the outfield (to the grass at Lions Park or past the baseline at Doug Tarry Complex)
- 37. Balls hit to the infield will allow batter and baserunners to advance a maximum of one base
- 38. Sliding into base is allowed at all bases except at first - no sliding into first base
- 39. Baserunners may be called out when tagged by a defensive player in possession of the ball, or by force out (when baserunner must advance and defensive player with possession of the ball touches the base before the baserunner)

CATCHING

- 40. Catchers may not block home plate when a runner is advancing from third base - catchers must stand in front of the plate to ensure safety of both players and not on the base path or on home plate. A runner coming from third will be called safe when approaching the plate if the catcher is blocking their path
- 41. When there are two outs and the player who will be catcher for the next inning is on base, that player can be switched for the last player who was out so they can get their gear on before the next inning

OVERTHROWS

- 42. If a ball is overthrown and goes out of play, it is considered a dead ball and runners may not advance.
- 43. If runners are between bases when the ball is overthrown out of play, they will be permitted to take the base they are approaching at the time the ball was overthrown.

EQUIPMENT

- 44. When there are two outs and the player who will be catcher for the next inning is on base, that player must be switched for the last player called out and get their gear on before the next inning
- 45. Catchers must wear the leg guards, chest protector, and catcher's helmet.
- 46. Batters/base-runners must wear a helmet with face mask until they have entered the dugout

Ball: 11" soft core ball

Pitcher: In the pitching circle - from the rubber

Base Distance: 50 feet