

# Optimist Softball Rules

---

## *ATOM (Gender-Inclusive)*

### **Ages 6 to 9**

Stress that this is a developmental program – emphasis should be placed on learning the fundamentals, good sportsmanship, and having fun.

1. Unless otherwise specified, all rules are those recognized by Softball Ontario.
2. There will be 10 players in the field; however, teams can play with 7 – anything less the team must forfeit. In the case of forfeits, a fun game will be played and players will be shared to create equal teams. The umpire is to remain and umpire the game per usual – umpire's cards **MUST** be signed.
3. Calling across other players from teams who are not playing is allowed and that player can wear their own team shirt.
4. Stealing bases is not allowed.
5. Coaches or an adult will begin pitching the 1<sup>st</sup> game of the season and all subsequently scheduled games in May. Games scheduled after the first tournament must have a player pitch to their own team. Coaches or an adult are permitted to take the mound to teach but not to pitch for the remainder of the season.
6. There is a max of 2 innings for a pitcher to pitch per game. The other players are encouraged to try other positions. Players must alternate positions.
7. There is a five pitch limit; no walking. After the fifth unsuccessful pitch, the player is considered out.
8. Pitchers must use an underhand pitching style, and must pitch from the rubber mound. Coaches and children may move in closer; 5-feet from the rubber mound at max.
9. Pitchers must start with both feet together and facing home plate, but may take one-step in delivery. One foot must remain on the the pitching rubber until the ball has left their hand.
10. A ball being hit to the outfield will allow the base runners to advance and continue to advance until the ball has reached infield and a defensive player has made an attempt to throw the ball, at which time the base runner must cease further base advancement.
11. A ball hit into infield will allow the base runners to advance until such time that a player has gathered up the ball.
12. If a ball is overthrown and goes out of play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, it is considered a dead ball and the runner must stop.
13. Sliding into base is allowed.
14. If there are two outs and the catcher for the next inning is on base, they should be switched with the last out OR furthest from batting.
15. All games are limited to 1 hour and 15 minutes; no new innings will begin after that. Every inning has a six-run limit. Max of 7 innings per game.
16. During the regular season, tied game stay tied; only during tournaments are games played out.
17. There are to be **NO** noisemakers during regular season and/or tournaments. IE: air horn, whistles, etc.

Ball: 10" soft core

Pitcher Distance: 30 feet for coach/helper, refer to rule #5 and #8.

Base Distance: 50 feet