



**ELKHORN**  
**ATHLETIC**  
**ASSOCIATION**

2021 FUTURES

SOFTBALL RULES OF PLAY

## Table of Contents

<b>Mission Statement.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vision Statement.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EAA Core Values .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Integrity.....	3
Respect.....	3
Commitment.....	3
Discovery.....	3
Inclusion.....	3
<b>General Evolution Softball Rules.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Borrowing Players .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Game Cancellations/Postponements.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4/5 &amp; Under Division - Tee Ball .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Team .....	5
The Game.....	5
Umpires .....	5
Pitching/Catching.....	5
Batting.....	5
<b>6/7 &amp; Under Division - Coach Pitch &amp; Tee .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Team .....	6
The Game.....	6
Umpires .....	6
Pitching/Catching.....	6
Batting.....	6
<b>8 &amp; Under Division - Coach/Kid Pitch .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Team .....	7
The Game.....	7
Pitching/Catching.....	7
Batting.....	8
Base Running .....	8
<b>10 &amp; Under Division - Kid Pitch.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Team .....	9
The Game.....	9
Pitching/Catching.....	9
Batting.....	10
Base Running .....	10
<b>12 &amp; 14 Under Division - Kid Pitch.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Team .....	10
The Game.....	10
Pitching/Catching.....	11
Batting.....	11
Base Running .....	11

## **Mission Statement**

We are an Elkhorn-based non-profit youth sports organization dedicated to providing a safe, enjoyable, positive learning environment. We serve families with children of all ages and all skill levels from the community and across the region. We encourage and support the holistic development of every child, teach leadership and other essential skills, and inspire our athletes to seek excellence in all aspects of their lives. We will accomplish this by encouraging parental involvement and by providing professional staff, state-of-the-art facilities, and programs commensurate with ability, potential, and interest at the developmental, recreational, and competitive levels.

## **Vision Statement**

We aim to develop a culture of excellence that establishes standards and expectations that are shared among all of our coaches, parents, players, volunteers, staff, board, and the community. Every member of the organization will hold each other accountable and strive to make meaningful contributions. Our ongoing success will be determined by every individual's character, leadership, beliefs, passion, and commitment, resulting in a first-class youth sports organization.

## **EAA Core Values**

### **Integrity**

Being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

### **Respect**

Putting people first – players, families, colleagues, officials, opponents, etc.

### **Commitment**

Everyone is committed to the developmental process, as well as to the organization's mission, vision, and values.

### **Discovery**

We use player-centered learning and teaching as well as coaching and parent education.

### **Inclusion**

We provide programs for all children of all skill levels and abilities who want to play.

## General Futures Softball Rules

The age cutoff for Division is December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year for the current year/season of play. Players may play up one age level from their current age.

In general, Futures Softball players should have the opportunity to play multiple positions in order to learn to play and enjoy the games.

- No player shall play the same position for more than two innings per game.
- Players should not sit more than one innings in a row unless the player is injured or sick.

All players must wear a helmet with a facemask while batting at practices, in warm-ups, in batting cages, while in the on-deck circle, and while on base.

Softball equipment provided for each team is the responsibility of the coach and should be returned at the end of the season.

A maximum of three coaches will be allowed in the dugout during the game; only two coaches are allowed on the field during a game.

For 8U and above, the home team is responsible for entering and checking the game score on the EAA Futures Softball website within 48 hours after the game is completed. This will allow us to keep track of standings for seeding in the End-of-Season Tournaments. Scorekeepers from each team should check with each other after the game to make sure they agree on the score.

## Borrowing Players

Futures teams may borrow players from other Evolution teams in their age division or one age division below if they are short for a game. Borrowed players must be placed in the last position of the batting order and are only allowed to play outfield on defense.

## Game Cancellations/Postponements

Game cancellations/postponements are the responsibility of the Field Crews and the Schedule Director. Coaches may not reschedule games on their own. Coaches who know they cannot field a team should contact the Schedule Director no later than 72 hours prior to the scheduled game time. Games will only be rescheduled for valid reasons approved by the EAA Softball President such as important school functions or other emergency circumstances and only if time permits to reschedule the game. All other games should be played as scheduled by using borrowed players or the game will be recorded as a forfeit.

A final call will be made at 4pm on which fields, if any, are playable. Field status can be seen at <https://www.elkhornathletics.org/fieldinfo>

We will do our best to make up any games cancelled due to rainouts. Coaches are responsible for contacting each other to come up with 2-3 alternate dates that work for each and then notify our schedule director, Scott Tingelhoff, [scottt@elkhornathletics.org](mailto:scottt@elkhornathletics.org)

## 4/5 & Under Division – Tee Ball

*\*These are IN ADDITION to the EAA Futures General Rules starting on page 4.*

This division is for girls ages 4 through 5 as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. They play on a smaller field with a base length of 40 ft. A 10-inch reduced injury factor ball is used. *This is a developmental league and no scores are kept.* Coaches should teach fundamentals, rules, and object of the game.

### Team

All players play positions on the field with no player sitting on the bench. There should be no more than 6 players on the infield, and the remaining players should be evenly spaced beyond the base path. A team needs 6 players to field a team; they may borrow players from the opposing team to complete the infield. Borrowed players will still bat for their own team.

- When on defense, up to 2 coaches may be on the field to help their players with instructions. Coaches may not be in base paths or touch any player or ball.

### The Game

#### 1<sup>st</sup> 30 Minutes:

**Practice Stations** will consist of providing instruction to players in smaller groups. Each station should be manned by a volunteer coach and players will rotate between stations every 7-8 minutes. Stations may include teaching basic fundamentals of Throwing, Catching, Fielding, Hitting, and Base Running.

All stations will be provided with age-appropriate techniques and games to make it FUN for the new ball players.

It is recommended that coaches have **three** practice stations before playing the tee ball game. Coaches have discretion to pick the stations they want each week; however, we would recommend to always have a hitting and throwing station included.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> 30 Minutes:

**Tee-ball game** will consist of **one inning (two if time permits)** with every player batting and playing the field. No score shall be kept.

### Pitching/Catching

A player will be placed at the pitching and catching positions on the field for

defensive purposes. The catcher can assist with providing the ball to the batter's coach.

### **Batting**

All batters will hit off the tee only. The batter's coach should assist in placing the ball on the tee and helping the batter get positioned correctly. Once the ball is placed, the coach should move behind the catcher. All players will bat each inning in designated order determined at the beginning of the game. In front of home plate there is a half-circle that the ball must pass to be fair (the ball must go 3 ft.).

### **Base Running**

- The runner must hold base until the ball is hit.
- The runner may advance one base per ball in play.
- Base stealing not allowed.
- Last batter of the inning will hit a home run to clear the bases.

### **Play Stoppage**

- Outs will be enforced to award good defensive skills, but all players bat each inning no matter the number of outs.
- Runners cannot advance on an overthrow. The runner may advance one base per ball in play.

## 6/7 & Under Division – Coach Pitch & Tee

*\*These are IN ADDITION to the EAA Futures General Rules starting on page 4.*

This division is for girls ages 6 through 7 as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. They play on a smaller field with a base length of 40 ft. Pitching distance is 25'. A 10" reduced injury factor ball is used. *This is a developmental league and no scores are kept.* Coaches should teach fundamentals, rules, and object of the game.

### Team

All players play positions on the field, but no more than 6 on the infield. A team needs 6 players to field a team; they may borrow players from the other team to complete their infield. Opposing players will still bat for their own team.

- When on defense, up to 2 coaches may be on the field to help their players with instructions. Coaches may not be in base paths or touch any player or ball.

### The Game

A game will consist of 6 innings or 75 minutes. Please wrap it up as close to 75 minutes as possible so that the teams playing in game following will be able to get on the field. An inning will consist of 7 batters for each team. The inning is over when play on the 7<sup>th</sup> batter finishes her at bat. This is a developmental league and no scores are kept.

### Umpires

None

### Pitching/Catching

A player will be placed at the pitching and catching positions on the field for defensive purposes. The catcher can assist with providing the ball to the batter's coach. The pitcher must remain in the pitching circle while the coach is pitching.

### Batting

Coaches pitch (4) pitches maximum per batter, no matter the count or number of foul balls. If the player does not hit the ball into play, a tee is placed on home plate. The batter's coach should assist in placing the ball on the tee and helping the batter get positioned correctly. Once the ball is placed, the coach should move behind the catcher. Each batter will swing until they put the ball into play off the tee.

- Outs will be enforced to award good defensive skills, but 7 players bat each inning no matter the number of outs.

### Base Running

- The runner must hold base until the ball is hit.
- The runner may advance one base per ball in play.

### Play Stoppage

- Outs will be enforced to award good defensive skills, but 7 players bat each inning no matter the number of outs.

- Runners are allowed to advance (1) base on an overthrow, **unless** it is decided at the plate meeting by both coaches not to award any bases on overthrows.



## 8 & Under Division – Coach Pitch

*\*These are IN ADDITION to the EAA Futures General Rules starting on page 4.*

This division is for girls 8 years old as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. This league plays on the field with a base length of 55 ft. Pitching distance is 27'. Circle is 8' radius around the pitching rubber. A 10-inch reduced injury factor ball is used. This division will utilize umpires as standings will be recorded for the end-of-season tournament.

*Teams will utilize all Nebraska USA Softball J.O. rules and regulations with the following exceptions:*

### Team

Each team shall use 10 players on defense, six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders. Outfielders must line up 15' beyond the base path. All games should be played with no less than eight (8) players on the field; they may borrow players from the opposing team to complete the field. The borrowed players will still bat on their own team.

### The Game

A game will consist of 5 innings or 70 minutes, Finish-the-Inning, with no new inning starting after 65 minutes. Games may end in a tie. If home team is ahead after 4 ½ innings, the game is over. At this point the game ends with the score at the time as official.

- Inning: Each team on offense will be allowed five (5) runs or three (3) outs at which time the teams will alternate offense and defense. Balls and Strikes will not be kept or called.
- Run Ahead Rule: The game will be called at the end of four innings if one team is ahead by six (6) or more runs.
- Tiebreaker: Ties are allowed.
- Before the game each coach should provide a line-up card to the other coach with numbers and first names.
- The home team is responsible for entering and checking the game score on the EAA Futures Softball website within 48 hours after the game is completed. This will allow us to keep track of standings for seeding in the End-of-Season Tournaments.

### Pitching/Catching

At the start of each pitch, all outfielders shall be positioned in the outfield, and the player-pitcher shall take a position within the eight (8) ft. pitcher's circle and shall not take a position directly in front of the coach/pitcher.

- Coach-Pitcher: Shall be a member of the team's coaching staff & shall pitch the ball in an underhand motion to each batter of his/her team. *Coach-Pitcher Interference:* The coach-pitcher shall be considered part of the playing field. Exception: In the judgment of the umpire, if coach-pitcher interference occurs, the ball will be declared dead. Effect: All runners will return to the last base occupied.
- Player-Pitcher: Shall be an 8-Under playing member of the team. The player should stand in an area close to the coach-pitcher for defensive purposes.
- Note: The game moves faster if a coach is behind the catcher to speed up the return of the ball to the pitcher.

## Batting

All players present must bat using a continuous batting order. Players shall be listed by their first and last name in the order in which they will bat. Walks are not allowed.

**Coach Pitch:** Each batter will be allowed 6 pitches to bat the ball into play. This means that they must swing the bat on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch no matter what, or be called out. If the ball is fouled off, they are allowed another pitch, up to 10 total pitches by the coach. The batter is out if the 10<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled off. Each batter that fails to bat the ball in play will be counted as an out, and the next batter in the batting order will take his/her place at bat.

- A caught foul fly ball will be an out whenever it occurs, including the sixth pitch or any subsequent pitch.
- No Bunting allowed.
- The Designated Player (DP) Rule will NOT be used.
- Infield-fly rule: Not in effect.
- Dropped Third Strike: Not in effect. If a batter strikes out and the ball is dropped by the catcher. EFFECT: The batter is out and the ball is dead.

## Base Running

- Each base runner may lead off when pitched ball crosses home plate.
- Runners can only score on a batted ball or an overthrow, with the following guidelines for overthrows:
  - Runner can score if there is an overthrow on a play at 3B, or if an overthrow at another base forces lead runners to advance causing the run to score.
    - **Example:** Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, ball is batted into play and the overthrow occurs at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Runner at first is allowed to advance, causing the lead runners at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to advance as well, with the lead runner scoring.
    - **Example:** Runner at 2<sup>nd</sup> base only; ball is batted into play and the overthrow occurs at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Runner at 1<sup>st</sup> advances to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Runner at 2<sup>nd</sup> is allowed to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> on the batted ball but not home on the overthrow.
  - On overthrows to plays at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Home, trailing runners are

allowed to advance 1 base at their own risk.

- Base Stealing: Not allowed, including home plate with passed balls.

### Play Stoppage

- Runners may continue to advance bases until the ball is under control of an infielder and **on the dirt**. Should runners be, in the umpire's judgement, beyond the half-way line between bases they may advance to that base.
- There shall be a limit of one (1) overthrow on a play, with a maximum of one (1) base advancement for each runner. Should a second overthrow occur in the same play, the umpire shall immediately call Time and base runners will be returned to the last base occupied.
- A runner attempting to advance beyond the one base they are allowed to advance. EFFECT: May be put out while between bases. A runner cannot be put out while sole contact with a base.
- After all play ceases and the ball is dead, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was allowed to advance. EFFECT: The runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- NOTE: The umpire shall call Time when the lead runner has been stopped.

## 10 & Under Division – Player Pitch

*\*These are IN ADDITION to the EAA Futures General Rules starting on page 4.*

This division is for girls 9 & 10 years old as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. This division plays on a field with a base length of 60 ft. Pitching distance is 30 ft. All teams will play with an 11-inch (soft) ball in good condition. *Teams will utilize all Nebraska USA Softball J.O. rules and regulations with the following exceptions:*

### Team

All games should be played with no more than 10 (10<sup>th</sup> shall be a rover in the outfield) and no less than 8 players on the field. When playing with 8 players, the 9<sup>th</sup> spot in the batting order does not constitute as an out. A team must field a minimum of eight (8) of its own players or the game will be declared a forfeit. A team may borrow players (see borrowed player policy).

### The Game

A game will consist of five (5) innings, or 70 minutes, Finish-the-Inning, with no new inning starting after 65 minutes. Games may end in a tie. If home team is ahead after 4 ½ innings, the game is over. At this point the game ends with the score at the time as official.

- Either 3 outs or 5 runs determine a 1/2 inning.
- There will be unlimited substitutions allowed. Batting order will remain the same.
- All teams must keep a scorebook in the event of a dispute over the game scores. One is provided to you.
- Before the game each coach will provide a line-up card to the other coach with numbers and first names.
- Both teams are responsible for entering and checking the game score on the EAA Evolution Softball website within 48 hours after the game is completed. This will allow us to keep track of standings for seeding in the End-of-Season Tournaments.

### Pitching/Catching

Each new pitcher is allowed 5 warm-up pitches when entering a game, then 3 warm-up pitches to start her other innings.

- **New USA Softball pitching rule changes:**
  1. Allows the pitcher to choose to start with their stride foot behind (not touching) the pitching rubber.
  2. Allows the pitcher to choose to step back off of the rubber with their stride foot before striding forward.
  3. Allows the pitcher to choose to start with both feet touching the rubber.
- Coach will pitch (to their own batters) after 4 (four) balls have been called or

a pitch hits the batter. The coach will continue with the count that was started by the pitcher. When the coach comes in they will **continue with the count started by the pitcher**, and will pitch until the player strikes out or puts the ball into play, up to five (5) additional pitches. This means they need to swing at the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch no matter what or be called out.

- The coach who is the designated pitcher can also act as infield umpire when needed.

### Batting

All offensive players on the bench will bat consecutively whether they are playing the field or not. The infield fly rule does not apply.

- No bunting allowed.
- Drop 3rd strike rule is NOT in effect; batter is out on strike three.
- A ball that hits the ground and, then the batter, will be called a ball.
- No walks will be allowed.
- Batter can strike out against the coach.

### Base Running

- Each base runner may leave the base after the ball has been released from the pitcher's hand.
- Runners can only score on a batted ball or an overthrow, with the following guidelines for overthrows:
  - Runner can score if there is an overthrow on a play at 3B, or if an overthrow at another base forces lead runners to advance causing the run to score.
    - **Example:** Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, ball is batted into play and the overthrow occurs at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Runner at first is allowed to advance, causing the lead runners at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to advance as well, with the lead runner scoring.
    - **Example:** Runner at 2<sup>nd</sup> base only; ball is batted into play and the overthrow occurs at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Runner at 1<sup>st</sup> advances to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Runner at 2<sup>nd</sup> is allowed to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> on the batted ball but not home on the overthrow.
  - On overthrows to plays at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Home, trailing runners are allowed to advance 1 base at their own risk.
- Base stealing will not be allowed (this includes passed balls and wild pitches).

### Play Stoppage

- Runners may continue to advance bases until the ball is under control of an infielder in the pitcher's circle.
- There shall be a limit of two (2) overthrows on a play, with a maximum of two (2) base advancements for each runner. Runner can advance for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time only if a second attempted play/overthrow occurs. Should a third overthrow occur in the same play, the umpire shall immediately call Time and base runners will be returned to the last base occupied.

- A runner attempting to advance beyond the one base they are allowed to advance. EFFECT: May be put out while between bases. A runner cannot be put out while sole contact with a base.
- After all play ceases and the ball is dead, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was allowed to advance. EFFECT: The runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- NOTE: The umpire shall call Time when the lead runner has been stopped.

## 12 & Under Division – Player Pitch

*\*These are IN ADDITION to the EAA Futures General Rules starting on page 4.*

This division is for girls 11 & 12 as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year.

This division plays on fields with a base length of 60 ft. Pitching distance is 35 ft. All teams will play with a 12-inch regular optic yellow softball. Game rules may be altered with the mutual agreement of team coaches to complete the game in the allotted time. *Teams will utilize all Nebraska USA Softball J.O. rules and regulations with the following exceptions:*

### Team

All games should be played with no more than 10 players on the field. The 10<sup>th</sup> shall be a rover in the outfield.

### The Game

A game will consist of six (6) innings or 70 minutes, Finish-the-Inning, with no new inning starting after 65 minutes. If the game is tied, then declare a tie. If home team is ahead after 5 ½ innings, the game is over. At this point the game ends with the score at the time as official.

- Either 3 outs or 5 runs determine a 1/2 inning.
- Run rule: 12 runs after 3 innings, game can continue to time limit at coach's discretion.
- All teams must keep a scorebook in the event of a dispute over the game scores. One is provided to you.
- Before the game each coach will provide a line-up card to the other coach with numbers and first names.
- There will be unlimited substitutions allowed. Batting order will remain the same.
- Both teams are responsible for entering and checking the game score on the EAA Futures Softball website within 48 hours after the game is completed. This will allow us to keep track of standings for seeding in the End-of-Season Tournaments.

## Pitching/Catching

A pitcher is allowed to pitch only 2 consecutive innings and no more than 3 innings total in any game.

- Each new pitcher is allowed 5 warm-up pitches when entering a game, then 3 warm-up pitches to start her other innings.
- **New USA Softball pitching rule changes:**
  - Allows the pitcher to choose to start with their stride foot behind (not touching) the pitching rubber.
  - Allows the pitcher to choose to step back off of the rubber with their stride foot before striding forward.
  - Allows the pitcher to choose to start with both feet touching the rubber before striding forward.

## Batting

All offensive players on the bench will bat consecutively whether or not they are playing the field. A batter who throws her bat is out. (This is an umpire's ruling).

- The infield fly rule does apply.
- Bunting is allowed.
- On a walk the batter is awarded 1st base, and may not advance another base until the next pitch is thrown.
- Drop 3rd strike rule is NOT in effect; batter is out on strike three.
- A ball that hits the ground, and then the batter, will be called a dead ball and the batter is awarded first base.

## Base Running

- Base stealing is allowed at second and third.
- Home is closed; runner cannot advance to home on a wild pitch or passed ball.
- Each base runner may leave the base after the ball is released from the pitcher's hand.
- If the defensive team attempts to throw out a runner at 3rd base, the runner is allowed to advance to home at her own risk. This means if you try and throw out a girl stealing 3rd and the throw gets away, the runner can come home and score.

## Play Stoppage

- Runners may continue to advance bases until the ball is under control of an infielder in the pitcher's circle.
- One base allowed on an overthrow, unless another attempt is made to put the runner out at the next base, in which case the runner can advance an additional single base on the 2<sup>nd</sup> overthrow (and so forth if there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> overthrow).
- A runner attempting to advance beyond the base they are allowed to advance. EFFECT: May be put out while between bases. A runner cannot be put out while in sole contact with a base.
- After all play ceases and the ball is dead, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was allowed to advance. EFFECT: The runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- NOTE: The umpire shall call Time when the lead runner has been stopped.

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Situation: We will treat this as a “practice” throw-down for the catcher. The runner can be tagged out a 2<sup>nd</sup>, but home will be closed for advancement by the 3<sup>rd</sup> base runner. This is to slow down the running up of the score and to allow more at-bats. Catchers have little experience and there will be plenty of over-throws on the steal at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
- Courtesy runner for the pitcher & catcher is allowed. Last available player inserted as runner.



