

# ALAMO HEIGHTS LITTLE LEAGUE MACHINE PITCH GIRLS (AGES 6-8) PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of the Machine Pitch program is to teach the game of softball to children who have only a beginner's knowledge of softball. Practices, games and equipment are controlled to reduce risk and maximize learning opportunities. The emphasis of the program is on learning, and not game scores. In fact, the games utilize a pitching machine fed by an Umpire, who also can control the advancement, or position of the runners. The AHLL does not keep game results or league standings in the Machine Pitch program.

## GROUND RULES

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**A. Preliminaries.** Each coach shall furnish their batting order with player names and numbers to the announcer's booth prior to the game. The home team is responsible for adult supervision of the announcers' booth (including collection of the lineups) and the visiting team is responsible for providing 1 person for the concession stand for the entire game. Failure to provide these positions will result in delaying the game. The umpires will not start the game until these requirements are met, and the playing time of this game will be reduced by the time it takes to fill these positions.

**B. Late Players.** If a player arrives after the first pitch is thrown, the coach of that team shall call time out and notify the opposing coach that the player has arrived late and will place this player in the last batting position on the roster.

**C. Regulation Game.** Games shall last one (1) hour or six (6) innings, whichever comes first. An inning cannot begin less than (5) minutes prior to the one-hour limitation. If an inning extends past the allotted time period, that inning will be allowed to conclude. Makeup games will be scheduled subject to field and date availability at the discretion of the Commissioner.

**D. Five Run Rule.** The Girls Machine Pitch program will have a three out or (5) run limit per half inning, which ever occurs first.

### **E. Pitching.**

**1. Machine Pitching.** Before the game, coaches for both teams along with the Umpire will mutually agree on the speed and setting of the pitching machine. Any change of speed or setting of the pitching machine must be mutually agreed upon by the coaches, with any dispute settled by the umpire. Batters will be given (5) pitches administered by the Umpire. There will not be any walks. A fifth pitch that is foul tipped will be treated as a foul tipped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike according to the rulebook. The batter can continue to get pitches as

long as they are fouled tipped and not caught for an out. The Umpire has the discretion to allow the batter additional pitches if the machine is acting inconsistently. The Umpire may adjust the machine if he needs to. The pitcher shall occupy a space to either side of the pitching machine but not in front of the mound.

**2. Pitching Defense.** A hit ball will remain in play until the pitcher delivers the ball to the Umpire from the area immediately surrounding the pitcher's mound. The defensive coach on the field should point out any defense plays that are available to the pitcher before the pitcher attempts to deliver the ball to the Umpire. When the pitcher has determined there are not more defensive plays he can make, then he should deliver the ball to the Umpire. Runners may advance on an overthrow to the pitcher, but not on an overthrow to the Umpire. An attempt to throw the ball to the Umpire from foul territory will not stop play and the Umpire should not attempt to catch the ball. The **offensive coaches** should not take advantage of **confusion by the defense** to run up the score. The Umpire has final discretion in awarding bases to any runner and declaring the play dead. **Sportsmanship** is the better form of discretion on this matter. If a hit should just be a single, than treat it as a single.

**3. Machine Interference.** If a ball hits the pitching machine, or comes to rest under it, the Umpire will call the play dead and the runners will be allowed the next base they were attempting to get to. The Umpire has the discretion to call any ball dead and determine the location of a runner.

**F. Weather.** The Board Members in charge of Field Maintenance or, if absent, the Board Members on duty, will determine whether or not the fields are playable due to weather. Once a game is begun, the umpire makes all judgments regarding halting play due to weather conditions. If a game is only temporarily halted, it is resumed from the point at which it is stopped. The rescheduling of any halted or suspended game shall be at the sole discretion of the Commissioner.

**G. Stealing, Bunting and Sliding.** Runners may not advance ("steal") a base in Machine Pitch ball. Runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> cannot advance to home on anything but a hit. There is no bunting. Sliding is not recommended but is legal.

**H. Infield Fly Rule.** The Infield Fly rule does not apply.

**I. Full Roster.** Players can be removed from a team and placed on a Minor team in the event the need arises during the season. However, these players are not eligible for city or all-star play. The Player Agent can loan players to a team if the coach knows ahead of time that he will have less than nine players in attendance. If a coach finds he has less than nine players at the start of the game, he can borrow a player from another Machine Pitch team. If a team has less than nine players, including a borrowed player, then the umpire can be excused and a scrimmage will replace the game scheduled. In that this is to be a **learning opportunity**, all effort should be made to not forfeit.

**J. Mandatory Play.** Coaches must alternate their players' time between the infield and the outfield. Each team will play their entire roster in the field each inning. Coaches are to set the defense as close to the true positions as possible and place the rest of the players in the outfield. Try to rotate all defensive players each inning to a different defensive position. Teams will bat their entire team roster in the same order throughout the game.

**K. Sportsmanship and Coaching.** Good sportsmanship should be used at all times by every participant or observer of the game. Taunting, negative comments, and foul language will **not be tolerated**. The Umpire must first grant coaches a timeout before leaving the dugout. Any coach that comes on to the field without asking for a time out first may be removed from the game. This does not include injuries. The Umpire may remove any participant from the game, or any observer from the facilities. Each team may have one defensive coach on the field to give constructive suggestions to the players. The coach must be positioned in the outfield behind the base path and cannot interfere by touching the ball or players during the play. The head coach will be required at 3<sup>rd</sup> base with an assistant coach at 1<sup>st</sup> base. The head coach will be more familiar with league philosophy and should not take advantage of an opportunity to **run-up** the score.

**L. After the Game.** Both teams are responsible for cleaning their respective dugouts and spectator bleachers.