



## U17 Rules - 2024 SARNIA LEAGUE

Sarnia Heat Girls Fastball follow Softball Ontario rules.  
These are the modifications specific to the Sarnia League.

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### General

- Season begins Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> and runs each Tuesday – Thursday until August 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup> will be the final day, followed by lunch and awards.
- The season is divided into two sections: League Play and Tournament Seeding.
- At the end of League Play, the 1st place team will be named “League Champions”.
- At the conclusion of League Play, the standings will be erased and the Tournament Seeding round robin will begin.
- Teams will play for the Tournament Championship on the final day, Saturday, August 8th.
- Schedule, Rules, Information, Standings, etc. will be posted at [sarniaminorathletic.com/girls-fastball/](http://sarniaminorathletic.com/girls-fastball/)
- In the event that teams seem unfair, the executive/convenor may move a player to a different team. No players will be moved after Thursday, May 23rd.
- Win = 2 Points    Tie = 1 Point    Lose = 0 Points
- Scoring runs is important, as total runs scored will decide any tie breaker in the standings.
- If a team can not field a team, they will forfeit the game. The team with enough players will receive 2 points for the win and a score of 12-0. The team that forfeits will receive 0 runs and 0 points.
- Parents need to consider helping out with their players' team.
- There must be a minimum of one female Coach/Dugout Mom/Helper/Scorekeeper on the bench for every game.
- Teams should have:
  - 1 x Dedicated Head Coach
  - Up to 3 x Assistant Coaches
  - 1 x Dugout Mom/Helper per game (helps with getting players ready to bat and catchers equipment)
  - 2-3 Pre-Game/Practice Helpers (Retrieve balls, pack away equipment, play catch with players, warmup pitchers). Helpers are great for when Coaches will miss a game or practice.
  - Manager (send out team texts/emails, contact the convenor with final scores or canceled games)
  - Scorekeeper
  - Snack/Treat Organizer (schedule what family is responsible to bring the after game treat)

**NOTE: SAFETY RULE:** During a game, a maximum of 4 Adults can only be on the bench, one must be a female. Pre-game warmups and practices are unlimited coaches and helpers.

### COACHES and HELPERS

- The #1 priority in Sarnia Heat Fastball is for all coaches, players and parents to have **FUN**. Winning and Championships are always secondary.
- The executive will ask coaches/helpers that do not make FUN the #1 priority to step down.
- Fairplay Policy is in effect. All players must play all positions unless a player chooses not to.
- Fairplay Policy is in effect. All players must get an opportunity to bat leadoff, cleanup and last at some point.
- Fairplay Policy is in effect. All players must take their turn sitting out an inning.
- Fairplay Policy is in effect all season, including championship games.
- The executive will ask coaches not following the Fairplay Policy to step down.
- Each team must have at least one female Coach/Dugout Mom/Helper present on the bench for all games.
- Players that are sitting an inning should be encouraged to stay engaged by throwing a ball, practice pitching or hitting into the practice net. This is where assistant coaches and team helpers come in handy.
- At the conclusion of each game, both teams coaches need to verify the final score and the winning teams coach/manager must text the score to the division convenor.
- Coaches and regular helpers must complete and pass a Police Background Check before they can take the diamond with players (paid by the SMAA). Police checks are good for 5 seasons.
- All coaches and regular helpers must complete the “Abuse Awareness for Adults” and “Provincial Coach Certification Program” online courses before they can take the diamond with players. (paid by the SMAA).
- **SAFETY RULE:** Coaches and helpers must wear the Volunteer shirt each game and practice to identify themselves.
- Coaches shirts are “*on loan*” and must be returned at the end of the season.

- **SAFETY RULE:** Coach/Dugout Mom/Helpers are required to wear lace up footwear. Anyone wearing improper footwear can not be on the diamond (for insurance reasons).
- A maximum of 4 Coach/Dugout Mom/Helper are permitted on the diamond during a game. One must be a female.
- 3rd base coaches are encouraged to incorporate signals for batters and runners.
- **SAFETY RULE:** During a game, extra coaches/helpers must be outside the diamond fence and not on the bench.
- Unlimited coaches/helpers can be used for pre-game warmups.
- Unlimited coaches/helpers can be used for practices.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Anytime, even for fun, if a player is swinging a bat and hitting a ball, they must wear a batting helmet. This includes if they are using the practice hitting net.
- Coaches are responsible for abiding by all safety rules at games/practices.
- It is the coaches responsibility to ensure that the Umpires, Players and Parents/Guardian are aware of all safety and all U17 Rules.

### Player Informations

- **PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS TO YOUR COACH and TEAM:** Contact your coach if you cannot make a game or practice. Our volunteer coaches plan games and practices in advance and it's not fair to them to expect a full team and only a handful of players show up.
- Players are to hustle on and off the field at all times.
- **SAFETY RULE:** All players are to wear the proper uniform each game and practice. Provided Sponsor Shirt, Ball Pants, Visor and proper footwear (rubber cleated shoes or running shoes). All other footwear is not permitted. Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- A player wearing shorts to a game or practice is not permitted on the diamond.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players are **NOT PERMITTED** to wear objects around the neck, fingers, wrists, and ankles, as well as any dangling or hoop earrings. (Example: necklace, rings, bracelets, hair scrunchie, hair tie or elastic, etc.)
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players **ARE PERMITTED** to wear Medical Alert Information, stud earrings and facial piercings. **Players wearing permitted items must do so at their own risk.**
- **SAFETY RULE:** Sunglasses are permitted for Fastball use whether on the field or at bat. An umpire can ask a player to remove sunglasses if they are not being used and resting on their head or visor.
- **SAFETY RULE:** The Sarnia League will provide each team bats, batting helmets (with cage and chin strap), pitcher's mask and catcher's gear. Players can use their own approved gear. Gear must be certified for Softball and Fastball.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players are asked to stay engaged and cheer on their team during games.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Other than Coaches/Dugout Mom/Helpers; no family members, friends or pets are allowed on the diamond or in the dugout during a game or practice.
- Players are encouraged to bring a water bottle to each game and practice.
- **SAFETY RULE:** When a team is in the field, only the pitcher is required to wear a protective fielding mask (provided by the league). It is not required that other positional fielders wear a mask, but we highly recommend it. Positional fielders masks are not provided by the league.

### Games and Practices

- HOME TEAM will take the 1st base dugout. AWAY TEAM takes the 3rd base dugout.
- **NO BATTING PRACTICE, BASE RUNNING OR PITCHER WARM UPS ON THE INFIELD GRAVEL BEFORE A GAME.** Pitchers are to warm up in the outfield along the fence and players are welcome to hit on the grass or into the practice net. The infield is for infield warm ups only.
- The home team gets infield warm ups first.
- Game time clock starts at the top or bottom of the hour regardless if ground rules have been discussed, the home team is on the field or not or the umpires are running behind. Games must start on time.
- After the top or bottom of the hour start time, no new inning can start after 90 minutes.
- Players showing up once the game has started will be permitted to join the game.
- A team may field a maximum of 10 players. Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Infielders and 4 Outfielders. NO ROVER. Additional players will sit an inning and should be encouraged to stay engaged by throwing a ball, practice pitching or hitting into the practice net.
- A minimum of 6 players is required to officially play a game.
- Outfielders are **NOT REQUIRED** to stand on the outfield grass. An outfielder must be at least:
  - a minimum of 10 feet behind the baseline
  - or 10 feet behind an infielder
- A game concludes at the time limit, 7 complete innings or if the Mercy Rule is enforced.
- MERCY RULE: After 5 completed innings, one team is 12 runs ahead.
- **NOTE:** At the end of 7 innings or when the Mercy Rule has taken effect and there is still time to play, the game will continue. The score at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or Mercy is the final score and any additional runs are not to be counted. We have 90 minutes, let's use them and have some extra fun.
- An inning is concluded when 3 outs have been recorded or 6 runs have been scored.
- **SAFETY RULE:** During a game/practice, players are to remain in the dugout or on the diamond with the coaches and team.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players are to ask a coach permission to leave the diamond.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players requiring the restrooms during a game or practice must be accompanied by a coach/dugout mom/helper or adult family member.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Only the executive, convenor, coaches, dugout mom, helpers and players are permitted in the dugout and on the diamond during a game/practice.
- At the conclusion of each game, both teams coaches need to verify the final score and the winning teams coach/manager must text the score to the division convenor.
- Executive, convenors, coaches and helpers on the field or in the dugout must complete and pass a Police Background Check (paid by

SMAA Girls Fastball). Police checks are good for five seasons.

- **SAFETY RULE:** All players on the field are to be engaged and paying attention at all times.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Executive, Umpires, Convenor and Coaches have the authority to move distracted players to a safer position or remove them from the field. SAFETY FIRST.
- If a player or coach is ejected from a game, this will result in a one game suspension and a meeting with the Fastball Executive.
- If a player or coach is ejected a second time, the player or coach will be suspended the remainder of the season and the player will receive no refund.
- **PARENTS AND SPECTATORS - Please be aware of this rule:** If a parent or spectator is asked to leave the park because of unruly behavior, that **team's coach will also be removed** from the current game and receive a one game suspension and a meeting with the Fastball Executive.

#### Short Players or Forfeits

- If a team is short players (5 or less), the team can ask players from another U17 Sarnia League team or the Sarnia U19 Travel Team to join them.
- **SAFETY RULE: FOR TRAVEL PLAYERS JOINING IN:** Travel players can not pitch, must be 18 years of age or under and be wearing their full travel uniform.
- Acquiring players from another team will result in the team forfeiting the game. A fun game will now be played.
- If the team that is short players can not acquire other players, both teams on the field can either split up the players and have a fun game or teams are still welcome to invite other U17 Sarnia League and Sarnia U19 Travel players to join in the fun game.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Players not registered with Sarnia Heat Girls Fastball are not eligible to play in fun games.
- The team with enough players will receive 2 points and a 12-0 score.
- If both teams forfeit, no points or score will be recorded.

#### **NEW FOR 2024**

- **NEW THIS SEASON:** Pitching Circle. A 16' diameter circle will be placed around the pitching rubber (Softball Ontario Rules).
- Just because the ball is in the pitcher's possession and they are in the circle doesn't mean the play is dead. The circle is designed to stop runners from "dancing" between bases.
- Once the ball is in the pitcher's possession in the circle, the runner either continues to run or stops at the closest base.
- If the runner stops once the ball is in the circle, the runner must stay or return to the base. A runner can not advance once they commit to stopping.
- A runner in full stride can continue to run the bases even if the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle. The pitcher must throw the ball to stop the runner. If the pitcher throws the ball out of the circle, all base runners can advance.
- If a batter attempts to steal 2nd base on a walk. As long as they do not stop their full stride, they can attempt to steal second. The batter can not walk to first, then take off for second once they touch first. They must run at full speed right from the batter's box.

#### Pitchers

- Pitchers can pitch 2 innings in a row, then every other inning. 2 innings in a row do not need to be their first time taking the mound.
- One batter in an inning is considered an inning.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Pitchers must wear a Face Mask during game play. Masks are provided, or a player can wear their own CSA approved mask.
- Pitchers can pitch windmill or bowling style only.
- Beginning of a game, inning or pitching change, pitchers get a maximum of 5 warmup pitches.
- **SAFETY RULE:** If a pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning, that pitcher must be removed. They can come back another inning.
- Pitchers DO NOT need to start with both feet on the pitching rubber.

#### Catchers

- If there are 2 outs and the catcher is on base, the catcher must be replaced with a substitute runner. The substitute runner is to be the last player recorded out.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Catchers must wear a catcher's mask. No batting helmets for game play.
- **SAFETY RULE:** In the event that the catcher is not ready, a coach must warm up the pitcher or a player that is sitting that inning. The player must wear a catching mask or batting helmet with a cage. Any coach/helper over the age of 18 years, a mask is not required, only recommended.
- Teams should have a coach/helper getting catchers ready to take the field.

#### Batting, Base Running and Stealing

- **SAFETY RULE:** Bats must be certified Softball or Fastball. **Any other bat is NOT PERMITTED.** A list of acceptable certifications is located at [sarniaminorathletic.com/girls-fastball/](http://sarniaminorathletic.com/girls-fastball/)
- **SAFETY RULE:** Any executive, coach, convenor or umpire may ask to inspect a bat. Non Softball or Fastball bats or bats with expired/incorrect certifications must be removed from the game/practice and not used again in the league.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Batters must wear the proper batting helmet. **Must have a cage and chin strap.**
- Batters can wear a ball hat under the helmet for a better fit.
- **SAFETY RULE:** Only the batters up to bat and on deck can be on the field swinging a bat. Other players must remain in the dugout.
- Double and triple deck batters should be ready in the dugout with a helmet on.
- Teams should have a coach/helper getting batters ready.
- The batter is out on a third strike regardless of whether the catcher catches the ball or not. NO PLAY AT FIRST. Runners can steal 2nd or 3rd base, but can not steal home.

- No infield fly rule.
- A base runner cannot leave the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand. Leaving early is a lead off and an out.
- Runners may steal second or third base on any pitch. A runner can not steal home on a pitch or wild pitch.
- **SAFETY RULE:** A base runner must slide if there is a play at home plate. No Slide will result in the runner being called out. A slide can be on a knee, head first or a foot shuffle slide. The idea is that the base runner stops at the plate to eliminate a collision.
- A catcher's overthrow back to the pitcher or the pitcher's inability to catch a throwback from the catcher when facing a batter is a **LIVE** ball. All base runners may advance, this includes third to home plate. Any ball that is overthrown anywhere and still in the park is a LIVE ball. The ball will remain LIVE until an umpire has called "time".
- In the event that a runner is on 3rd base and the catcher throws the ball after a pitch to 3rd, the runner may advance home as this is not a steal, but an advance.
- **A ball thrown over the fence during a play:** Each runner advances to the next base. Example: If the player is running to 3rd and is not at the bag when the ball goes over the fence, the runner stops at 3rd. If the batter runs to 1st, touches 1st and the ball goes over the fence, they get 2nd base. If a runner is ahead of them, they also advance one base.
- **A ball rolls under the fence during a play:** a base runner may advance to the next base if at least halfway. On a play at 1st, the hitter running to 1st base must stay at 1st base. The umpire will rule if other runners are halfway and may advance.
- Both Slap Bunting and Regular Bunting are allowed. NOTE: On a third strike, if the ball goes foul, that is an out. A player is also out if they step on the plate while bunting or step out of the batter box.
- NO squeeze bunts allowed.

**RAIN, SMOKE and HEAT DAYS**

- The Fastball Executive will inform the convenor if a game/practice has been canceled due to city closures, thunderstorms, rain, smoke or extreme heat. In turn, the convenor will contact the head coach who will contact the parents/guardians.
- All updates will be posted at sarniaminorathletic.com, Facebook and Instagram.
- If you have not heard from your coach, or seen a posting on the website or social media, consider this a game/practice night. Sometimes the night starts with a light rain, then clears up and we can take the diamond.
- In the event of a light rain without signs of lightning, the game will continue until the Executive, Umpire, Convenor or Coach decides to delay or cancel the game.
- If heavy rain starts just before a game or during a game, this will result in a delay until the umpire or executive cancels the night.
- If the game is playable and one team doesn't have enough players present, that team will forfeit and the team with enough players will receive 2 points and a final score of 12-0. If there are enough players, the teams split up the players and have a fun game.
- Lightning is the 20 minute rule.
- In the event of a Heat Warning. Sarnia Heat Girls Fastball will go with the recommendation from Lambton Public Health. Just because soccer cancels, doesn't mean that fastball is canceled. Because our games/practices are after 6pm, most times heat warnings do not affect us. We recommend bringing cold water and cooling towels. It's up to the parent/guardian if they want their player to play or not. Please be courteous and contact your coach if you will not be attending.

Please be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram

Website: [www.sarniaminorathletic.com](http://www.sarniaminorathletic.com)

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