

BVGSL U12 RULES 2025

General

1. All players must be registered members of the Douglas, Northbridge, Grafton, Uxbridge, Sutton, or Millbury Youth Softball Leagues.
2. Any rules not covered in league rules will automatically default to ASA/USA Umpire rulings.
3. Equal time for infield practice should be allowed to both teams if infield practice is permitted before the game on the field. For example, the home team takes infield at 5:30-5:40, the visiting team takes infield at 5:40-5:50.
4. Home team coaches will discuss all ground rules with the umpire and visiting team at **5:50**. Ground rules include field rules set by the town, including items such as curfews.
5. Lineup cards must be exchanged prior to every game, with an (*) denoting ALL club players on your roster. If you have a pitcher who also pitches for a Club/ASA registered, Class A or B Club team, that team must play in the "A" division. **If there is any question regarding a player's eligibility to play, contact your program's BVGSL representative, who will verify with the league.**
6. Substitution of players is allowed from within an age group or from a younger age division "playing up" in an older age division. The spirit of the substitution rules is to add players to get games completed and to eliminate an undesirable number of forfeitures. You CANNOT use substitute players for playoff games.
7. All games should start at 6:00pm (or scheduled time - if night game or otherwise noted). **A team not fielding 8 players within fifteen minutes scheduled time shall forfeit the game.** Once a game has been forfeited, both teams can still play for fun, but the score and results will not count towards league play. **Umpire will be paid and can leave.**
8. The decision to call a game off due to weather/field conditions or will be **made by the head coach of the home team at least two hours prior to the starting time.** If a decision is not made to cancel two hours prior, all players should report to the field at the scheduled start time. The umpire will then determine whether to call the game at the field. Coaches should make every attempt to reschedule these games within a two-week time period. All games should be made up by the week before the playoffs. Failure to do so MAY result in a forfeit for one or both teams unwilling / unable to make up the game. The home team head coach must notify their umpire coordinator of the rescheduled date/time/field.
 - a. **WEATHER RELATED DELAYS/CANCELLATION: In the observation of lightning / thunder:** teams must wait 30 minutes of no thunder / lightning before continuing. This is an ASA/USA enforced ruling. Be safe.
9. In the event of scheduled game conflicts/cancellations due to reasons other than weather/field conditions, **BOTH** coaches must agree to reschedule the game.
10. **Regarding play time allotted, Refer to ASA/USA rules:** Six full innings define a complete game. *An official game has a minimum of 4 complete innings, 3 and a half if the home team is ahead.* In the event

that a game needs to be continued/rescheduled (called by the umpire), teams will pick up where they left off to continue the game. Refer to ASA/USA guidelines.

- a. We are following ASA Rules, 5 Section 10 (No new inning will be started after one hour and 40 minutes of game time).
- b. Game time will be 1 hour and 20 minutes. At that time, you will finish the inning you are currently playing. The next inning will be your last inning. If you complete the game prior to the time limit the game will end.
- c. Regular Season games may end in a tie.

11. The USA Softball Run Ahead Rule is 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, & 8 runs after 5 innings.

12. In the U12 Division each team will **only be able to score up to 5 runs an inning.**

13. A twelve (12) inch ball will be used as the standard for all games.

14. Each player can sit out **one (1) consecutive inning.** An injured player can sit out more than one consecutive inning.

15. Each team will field 9-10 players if available on defense, consisting of 3-4 outfielders. All outfielders must remain in the outfield area until the ball is live. The ball is considered live when the ball is hit. Teams are allowed to start with 8 players with no penalty. Players that arrive after scheduled start time will be added to the bottom of the batting order. Notify the coach of the opposing team.

16. The home team is responsible for paying (currently \$70) the umpire during regular season games. If an umpire is not present at the start of the game, the designated assistant coach for the home team will umpire. OR

Safety

1. Catchers must wear catcher's equipment as provided by the league or equivalent, and wear personal protective equipment, as necessary, which is furnished by the player/team. This rule is in effect for both games and practices.
2. **Protective face guards must be worn by the pitcher.** It is HIGHLY recommended that it be worn by first and third base players as well. It is up to each town-league board to enforce this ruling
3. All players must wear uniforms. They must also wear rubber spikes or sneakers.
4. Bats must visibly display an ASA approved emblem to be used during games.
5. All Fields must have a double safety bag at first
6. Players must remain in the dugout or on the bench when not playing in the field. The on-deck batter may warm up. Pitchers may warm up between innings.

7. If an injured player in a continuous batting order is unable to play she will be skipped in the order. The opposing team will not get an automatic out. The player is allowed to return to the game at any time.
8. All injuries must be reported to the leagues of those participating in the game. All coaches will have on hand the emergency forms (registration forms) at all practices and games. Each team must have an emergency kit on hand with gloves, band aids, ice packs, gauze, etc.

Playoff

1. All players on your roster, must play in 50% of your scheduled TVL regular season games, to be eligible for the playoffs unless a documented injury or sickness precluded the player from participating. **Any team that uses a player (or players) in the playoffs that is not eligible will forfeit said playoff game(s).**
2. All teams must complete 90% on their scheduled games, to be playoff eligible.
3. In the event that teams are tied in standings at the end of the season, these criteria will be used to determine seeding for playoffs:
 1. Record
 2. Head-to-head record
 3. Best record in games involving all tied teams
 4. Runs scored
 5. Runs allowed
 6. Coin toss

Conduct

1. Profanity, kicking equipment or other unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, or parents will cause the umpire to give the team a warning. Continuation of this behavior by the player or coach after the warning will result in ejection from the game. If a parent continues to display unacceptable behavior after being warned, the team for whom their daughter plays may be forced to forfeit the game at the umpire's discretion.
2. Coaches shall assume the responsibility for the conduct of his/her players. They will also be responsible for assisting the umpire in managing unacceptable behavior displayed by the parents of girls of his/her team.
3. Coaches should encourage their players to cheer for their teammates. Chanting and singing of limericks will be allowed as long as they are not derogatory or degrading to the other team. **Once the pitcher presents the ball, all chanting and singing stops.**

Pitching

1. Pitching will be fast pitch regardless of the pitching motion utilized.
2. The starting pitcher once relieved, can return to pitch once during a game (provided that rule #3 has not occurred).

3. After three batters (3) are hit in a game, the pitcher must be removed from the mound. **The batter must make an attempt to move out of the way**; umpires discretion.
4. Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. All steps must be forward in motion.
5. The distance from the pitching rubber to home plate will be forty feet (40'). A moveable mound is acceptable.
6. **All U12 pitchers will be limited to a maximum of 3 innings per game.**

Base Running

1. The base runner may steal upon release of the pitch. Runners can advance on an overthrow, including home. **NO STEALING** will be allowed if the batting team is up by 10 runs.
2. The infield fly rule **WILL** be in effect. Infield fly rule by definition: The infield fly rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third or home. In these situations, if a fair fly ball is a hit that, in the umpire's judgment, is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is caught in flight. The rule states that the umpire is supposed to signal and / or announce, "Infield fly, if fair." If the ball will be almost certainly fair, the umpire will likely yell, "Infield fly, batter is out!" or just "Batter's out!" Any fair fly ball that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort is covered by the rule regardless of where the ball is caught. The ball need not be caught by an infielder, nor must it be caught in the infield. For example, if an infielder retreats to the outfield in an effort to catch a fly ball with ordinary effort, the Infield Fly Rule would be invoked, even if an outfielder ultimately caught the ball, and even if no infielder attempted to make a play on the ball. Similarly, a fly ball within the infield that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, but is caught by an outfielder, would also be covered by the rule. The infield fly rule is a judgment call by the umpire. On a caught infield fly, a runner must tag up (i.e., retouch, at or after the time the fly ball is first touched by a fielder, the base the runner held at the time of pitch) to be eligible to advance, as on any catch. If the infield fly falls to fair ground untouched, or is touched and dropped, runners do not need to tag up. In either case, because the batter is out, the force play on runners is removed.
3. The dropped third strike rule **WILL** be in effect. Definition: A "dropped third strike" play is when a third strike is not fielded cleanly by the catcher whereby an out is not recorded by the umpire. The batter may attempt to advance to first base on a "dropped" 3rd strike if there are less than 2 outs and 1st base is not occupied. If there are 2 outs, the runner can advance on a dropped third strike even if 1st base is occupied.
4. If a ball is caught in the air, runners may tag up. (Fair or foul territory).

5. The advancing base runner may not collide with the person covering the base. An upright collision will result in an automatic out. Slide or avoid. Umpire will make this decision.
6. A ball is considered dead when it is returned to the pitcher in the circle following a play; runners may not advance after the ball has been returned to the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.
7. Base runners may leave the base upon release of the ball by the pitcher.
8. To speed up the game, catchers may be replaced by a pinch runner at any time. Pinch runner is the last recorded out.

Batting:

1. The batting order which is established prior to the game shall include all girls on the team that are present and shall remain unchanged for the duration of the game. If a player arrives late she shall be added to the end of the existing batting order. Batting out of order is an automatic out.
2. A batter hit by a pitch takes a base. **Batters must make every attempt to move out of the way. (Umpire's discretion).** If at the umpire's discretion is that the batter made every attempt to move out of the way from being hit, then the batter will walk to first, and a runner will score if the bases are loaded.
3. Batters should be instructed not to throw their bats. If this occurs, one warning will be given to the team. If the infraction occurs again, the batter will be called out.
4. Batting helmets with cages must be worn while batting and running the bases. Chin straps are no longer mandatory.
5. Balls and strikes (with walks and strikeouts) will be called. A tipped third strike that goes directly into the catcher's mitt and is caught is considered an out.
6. **Bunting will be allowed - including slapping, but slash hitting will not be allowed.** A slash bunt is defined as a player showing bunt at any time during the pitch and then swinging at that same pitch. Slap bunting: Instead of taking a full swing, the slap hitter runs toward the pitcher and tries to make contact by bunting or slapping at the ball.

Please remember the age of this group. Review and clarify rules with both coaches and umpires prior to the start of the game. Rules are slightly modified to help develop the girls with hitting, fielding and pitching in keeping with the spirit of the game.