



2026 League Rules

Age 8 - Recreational

Updated April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026

\*Coaches may be suspended for not adhering to official USA Softball rules or the league modifications below.

### **Starting and Ending the Game**

- ◆ Fields have 60' bases and a 30' pitching rubber.
- ◆ No new inning may start after 75 minutes. Time begins when the home team takes the field to start the game.
- ◆ Games may end in a tie.
- ◆ Games will be canceled if the wind chill is 40 degrees or less at game time. After a game starts, umpires may use their own discretion to call off games at any time due to weather conditions.
- ◆ When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, play **MUST** be suspended for at least 30 minutes before resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning starts a new 30-minute delay. No additional playing time is added due to a weather delay. Time limit rules still apply.
- ◆ If the Air Quality index is between 151-200, games will still be played. If you have an insufficient number of players due to air quality concerns, and teams are at the fields, it will be up to the umpire to decide if the game will be played.
- ◆ If the Air Quality index is higher than 200, games will be canceled.

### **Batting/Offensive Rules**

- ◆ Bat to 3 outs or 5 runs, whichever comes first.
- ◆ A player may lead off once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. This applies to both a pitch from a player or a coach.

A player may make an attempt to advance to an unoccupied base forward after the ball has passed a catcher. The ball must go behind the catcher, and it must be pitched by a player, **NOT** a coach. A blocked ball by the catcher that remains to the side or in front of the catcher is not a passed ball. The runner attempts to advance at their own risk of being put out by the defense. There will be **NO STEALING OF HOME**. A player must be advanced home with a hit ball in fair territory.

- ◆ If sharing bats or helmets, please sanitize before the next use.



#### ◆ Two Offense Options

1. Coach pitches to their own players, bringing the tee out after 5 pitches (30' mound).
2. Player pitches from 30' in simple Power X stance or full motion throwing three pitches to the opposite batter, then coach gets three pitches. Tee comes out if no fair ball contact (adult may be behind catcher to keep game moving).

◆ If a player hits a batter while pitching, their pitching time for that offensive at bat will end, and the coach will pick up the pitch count with no more than six pitches total (i.e.. Player hits batter at pitch count 2, coach may pitch 3/4/5/6, tee will come out after the sixth pitch in the offensive at bat).

◆ Each team must supply their own team balls (10") and team tee.

◆ Organizations are encouraged to teach proper lead off mechanics.

◆ Mandatory use of continuous batting order, meaning all players will always be in the batting lineup. Players with a defensive position are not required to be in the first nine batting spots. The batting order may not change during the game.

#### **Defensive Rules**

◆ Maximum of 12 players on the field, but in the infield please only have kids in the actual positions (1B, 2B, 3B, SS, P, C) and then everyone else can play in the outfield. It is recommended for teams to play with 10 players in the field and make defensive switches during an inning at their own quick discretion. Teams may play short.

◆ Teams playing defense may have coaches out on the field with them keeping the players focused and in the right positions.

◆ If players happen to share equipment, please follow sanitizing rules.

◆ Once the ball is in the pitcher circle, the play is dead and runners may not advance any further.

◆ Every player **MUST** play an infield position at least once per game. We strongly urge coaches to rotate players to allow everyone a chance to develop and learn different positions.

◆ A player may not play the same position for more than two innings in a game. Exception, pitchers and catchers as needed.

#### **Equipment**

◆ All bats shall bear the USA Softball logo signifying that the bat meets USA Softball Standards.

◆ Shoes with metal cleats or spikes shall not be worn by players, managers, coaches or umpires.

◆ Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so the medical alert information remains visible.



- ◆ Batting helmets need to have a cage or face mask on the helmet.

### **Team Expectations**

- ◆ Teams are encouraged to arrive 30-45 minutes before the game to warm up. This early arrival teaches kids how to start preparing for games and helps ensure enough players are fielded to have a game.
- ◆ Home and away designations are on the league schedule. For doubleheaders, teams shall switch home and away for the second game.
- ◆ Each team provides at least one new softball each game. Umpires return the softballs after the game.
- ◆ After the game, teams will shake hands with their opponent in a line extending from the dugouts across home plate. For doubleheaders, this will be after the second game.
- ◆ Both teams are responsible for cleaning their dugout, under the bleachers and around the field. Please dispose of all garbage in proper receptacles.
- ◆ It is required that the home team listed on the schedule enters the game scores on the website. This MUST be done by the following Monday of when your game was played. If the score is not entered the home team will be penalized with a 6-0 forfeit.

### **Umpires**

- ◆ Understand that umpires will make mistakes just as the players and coaches will. Many umpires are young and/or new to umpiring, and this is where they get their start.
- ◆ Umpires are instructed to call a large strike zone to encourage players to swing the bat. The strike zone will be from the armpits to the knees approximately 4" off the outside corner and 2" off the inside corner.
- ◆ Remind parents that the game is for the kids and the atmosphere should be one of recreation, education and fun. Encourage parents to support their team and not yell or demean the umpires.
- ◆ Coaches and players shall not yell at umpires across the field or from the dugout. Doing so may result in removal from the game and/or future games. Even if a coach or player is not ejected, but a report or complaint is filed with the league office, that coach or player may be suspended from future games if the league office and board of directors deem inappropriate or non-sporting behavior.
- ◆ Only the head coach of the team should raise questions with the umpire. The conversation should be held in a respectful manner. If there is an issue a team would like addressed, the coach should contact the league office 24 hours after the game to discuss the issue.