



12U Fall Fastpitch League Rules

Points of Emphasis

- **When is a Play Dead?:**

- Infield Overthrow Rule:

When a batted ball is fielded by an infielder, runners may advance at their own risk during the initial play.

If the first throw by a defensive player is overthrown or not caught, runners are allowed to advance freely on the errant throw.

Each runner may continue advancing until the defense gains possession of the ball and control of the play.

Once the defense has secured the ball and stopped further advancement, the play becomes dead and no additional bases may be taken.

- Ball Returned to the Infield Rule:

When a ball is hit to the outfield, play will be considered dead once the ball is returned to and controlled by a defensive player in the infield.

At that point, runners may finish advancing only to the base they are actively moving toward.

Once runners stop or safely reach that base, no further advancement is permitted.

Batting and Offensive Rules

- Teams will bat until 3 outs are recorded or 5 runs are scored, whichever occurs first.
- Batters can run on a dropped third strike.
- Stealing is allowed. Runners may advance on a passed ball or wild pitch.
- Runners may advance on an overthrow from the catcher to the pitcher, or from the catcher on a steal.
- On a batted ball in play, runners may advance at their own discretion on any overthrow.
- There is no "must slide" rule. However, a runner is called out if they do not attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. NO PLOWING!
- With two outs, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher and/or pitcher of record.
 - The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out.
 - The same courtesy runner shall not run for the pitcher and the catcher at any time during the game.
- Only one warning for a player throwing the bat, whether intentional or unintentional.
 - Next violation, the player may be declared out by the umpire.
- A continuous batting order is mandatory.
 - Every player present must remain in the batting lineup for the entire game, and the batting order may not change during the game.

Pitching and Defensive Rules

- Batters may advance to 1st base after 4 balls and may advance to 1st base when hit by pitch.
- No pitcher shall pitch more than 3 innings per game in league play pending teams' number of pitchers.
 - Coaches are encouraged to use multiple pitchers.
- A coach or a player off the bench may warm up the pitcher.
 - Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a helmet.

Equipment Rules

- All bats must display the official USA Softball certification mark.
- Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted for players, coaches, managers, 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 must have a face mask or protective cage.

Team Expectations

- Teams are encouraged to arrive 30–45 minutes before game time to warm up and prepare.
 - 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 teams will be decided by a coin flip at the umpire meeting prior to the game.
- Each team must provide at least one new softball per game. Softballs will be returned after the game.
- No family or friends may be in the dugout unless they are a coach, practice helper, or team manager.

Postgame Expectations:

- Teams should line up and shake hands after each game. For doubleheaders, handshakes will occur after the second game only.
- Both teams are responsible for cleaning dugouts, bleacher areas, and surrounding field space.
- It is required that the home team listed on the schedule enters the game scores on PlayMetrics, or emails them to info@fargoareasports.com.

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.

Sportsmanship

- 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.

Starting and Ending the Game

- Games will be played using 60-foot base paths and a 40-foot pitching distance.
- Games will be six innings plus time. Games can go to 75 minutes, no new inning after this time is up.
 - Time starts when the home team takes the field to start the game.
- Games may end in a tie.
- The 8-run rule is in effect after five innings. If the home team is ahead by 8 or more runs after the top of the sixth inning, the game is over.
- Maximum of 5 runs per inning. If a play results in multiple runners scoring beyond the 5 run limit, only 5 runs may be counted.
- If a team is short players:
 - Teams with 8 players must play. There is no automatic out for the ninth spot in the order. The opposing team may play its full complement of players.
 - With 7 or fewer players, the team with enough players wins by a 6-0 forfeit. If both teams have 7 or less players, the game is not recorded in the league standings and the game will not be made up.

Temperature Policy:

- Games will be canceled if the wind chill is 40 degrees or lower at scheduled game time. After a game starts, umpires may use their own discretion to call off games at any time due to weather conditions.

Lightning and Thunder Policy:

- Play must be suspended immediately when thunder is heard or lightning is seen. A minimum 30-minute delay is required before play may resume. Any additional thunder or lightning restarts the 30-minute delay. Weather delays do not extend the game time limit.

Air Quality Policy:

- If the Air Quality Index (AQI) is between 151–200, games may still be played. If teams do not have enough players due to air quality concerns, the umpire will determine whether the game can proceed.
 - If the AQI exceeds 200, games will be canceled.

Playing Time

- Playing time will be solely determined by the team manager or coach. The league strongly encourages coaches to give the maximum amount of playing time to the maximum amount of players.
 - We strongly urge coaches to rotate players to allow everyone a chance to develop and learn different positions. This will be self-regulated by all coaches and their organizations.
- A player may not play in the same position for more than 3 innings in a game.
 - Except pitchers and catchers.
- The three outfielders MUST be positioned in the grass.
- 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.