

Riverbend Baseball Softball League

Softball Official Rules

Note: Rules for the RBSL will be in accordance with the USA/ASA Riverbend fast pitch softball rules and the USA/ASA Softball rules unless otherwise specified herein.

10U - 35 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length

12U - 40 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length

14U - 40 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length

Pitching Circle - 8 foot radius / 16 foot Diameter

- 1. Playing Field and Equipment**
- 2. Starting and Ending the Game**
- 3. Rules of Play (League Bylaws)**
- 4. Miscellaneous League Rules**
- 5. Player Eligibility**

OFFICIAL RULES FOR 2026 Season
As Of April 1, 2026.

1. Playing Field and Equipment

1.0 - Field Dimensions

- a. **10U** - 35 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length
- b. **12U** - 40 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length
- c. **14U** - 40 feet pitching distance / 60 feet base length
- d. **Pitching Circle** - 8 foot radius / 16 foot diameter
- e. **10u: 11" softball is used 12u and 14u: 12" softball is used**

1.1 - Uniforms

- a. All players on a team shall wear uniforms identical in color, trim and style. Numbers are required for all players. No matching numbers permitted for 2 separate players.
- b. Pitchers may not wear an undershirt with white or gray sleeves.
- c. Pitchers may not wear any wristbands or like items. Pitchers may wear a batting glove under the fielding glove provided that the batting glove is solid in color and matches the color of the fielding glove.
- d. Pitchers may wear sunglasses if they are not deemed distracting in the umpire's judgment.
- e. Metal spikes are prohibited in all divisions.
- f. Acceptable footwear can include rubber molded cleats/hard plastic cleats, turf shoes, or tennis shoes.

1.2 - Equipment

- a. The catcher may wear a catcher's mitt or a regular fielding glove.
- b. The first baseman may wear a first baseman's glove or a regular fielding glove.
- c. All players other than the first baseman and catcher must wear a regular fielding glove.
- d. The pitcher's glove may not be white, gray, nor in the judgment of the umpire, distracting in any manner.
- e. All players shall use a double ear-flap protective helmet while at bat or while running the bases.
- f. Catchers shall wear all appropriate protective gear including a catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built-in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard, chest protector, & shin and/or leg guards. Skull helmets shall not be worn; helmets shall fully cover both ears.
- g. The pitcher, 1st baseman, & 3rd baseman are **required** to wear a protective face guard when on the field.
- h. It is highly encouraged that all players wear a protective face guard.

1.3 - Bat Restrictions

- a. The official bat must bear either the ASA 2000 or 2004 certification mark and not be listed on the 2020 current USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List.
- b. All game bats shall be set in front of the dugout and inspected by umpires prior to the start of the game.
- c. **First offense for using an illegal bat:**
 1. If the umpire discovers that a bat does not conform to section 1.3 (a) and the ball has been put in play but before the next legal pitch, the defensive team will have the choice of the result of the play, or the batter being called out and all runners returning to the base occupied before the pitch. The bat will be removed from the game; however, it is not grounds for ejection.

2. If the bat is found to be illegal following the next legal pitch to any batter after the ball is put in play by such bat, the bat is removed from the game with no penalty.
3. If a bat is to be found illegal and the ball has not been put in play by that batter, the bat is removed from the game with no penalty.

d. Second offense for using an illegal bat:

1. If a team is found in violation of this rule a second time, then the head coach will be ejected in addition to the First Offense penalty.

2. Starting and Ending a Game

2.0 - Home Team

- a. Home team is predetermined according to the league schedule. The designated Away Team shall bat first to start the inning. For tournament play, a coin flip may be needed to determine the home team.

2.1 - Regulation Game

- a. A regulation game consists of seven innings for all age divisions, unless the time limit has been reached (Rule 2.02) or a mercy run rule is obtained (Rule 2.03).

2.2 - Time Limit

- a. For time limit purposes, the end of an inning consists of when the last out is made at the bottom of the inning.
- b. Time limit for 10u through 14u divisions is 2 hours with no new inning permitted to begin after one 1 hour & 45 minutes (1:45). The game time will start at the completion of the umpires/coaches pregame meeting.
- c. Once the time limit is reached:
 1. The inning will be completed.
 2. If the home team is leading and currently batting, the game is over.
 3. If the inning ends in a tie, the game is over and ends in a tie game.
- d. If at the end of a regulation game (7 Innings) the score is tied and there is time remaining on the clock, then extra innings may follow. If the game is still tied at the end of an extra inning and the time limit has expired, the game is over and ends in a tie.

2.3 - Run Rules

- a. A run rule of 5 runs per inning will be enforced for each inning of the game.
- b. The 5-run rule will stay in effect for the first 1 hour and 20 min of the game.
- c. Any inning started after 1 hour and 20 min will have no run limits.
- d. If 1 hour and 20 minutes occurs during an inning, the run rule will remain in effect until the inning is completed. **Ex:** If 1h and 20m occurs in the top of the 4th, the remainder of the top of the 4th and the bottom of the 4th will remain 5 runs per inning. The run rule will not be lifted until the beginning of the 5th inning.

2.4 - Mercy Rule

- a. An imposed Mercy (Run) Rule shall be used to complete a regulation game when one team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the prescribed limit. The home team shall not bat if they are winning, and the mercy requirement is met prior to the bottom half of the inning.

Similarly, if the home team is batting and meets the mercy requirement in the bottom half of the inning the home team shall cease batting and the game shall end.

- b. Mercy (Run) Rules are as follows:
 - 1. Run differential of 12 runs after the 3rd inning
 - 2. Run differential of 10 runs after the 4th inning
 - 3. Run differential of 8 runs after the 5th inning

2.5 - Lineups

- a. When submitting a lineup card to the opposing team, coaches must use the player's last name and uniform number. No two players may have the same number.
- b. Teams may play an official game with an eight-player lineup. If a team plays with an eight-player lineup, no out shall be declared for the ninth position in the batting lineup each turn at bat. A ninth player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting lineup as soon as they become available. The only players that are eligible to be added to the lineup must be in uniform. No coach may pick up a player from another team or in attendance that is not in the team's uniform. All players added to the game must also be on that team's roster.
- c. If a team drops to only seven eligible players, then that team must forfeit.
- d. Teams must use a continuous lineup (Round Robin), and all players may move freely in defensive positions within the continuous lineup scenario. Players under the traditional lineup of 9 players will be allowed to re-enter their starting position 1 time per game.
- e. If a player must leave the lineup for any reason except for an injury/illness, that position in the lineup will be called an out. Once skipped, that player will not be able to return to the game.
- f. If a player is ejected from the game, then their position in the lineup will be declared an out each time it comes up.
- g. If a player leaves the lineup due to illness or injury and is not able to bat when their turn comes up in the order, the coach is allowed to skip the at-bat, and it will not count as an out against the team. However, the player is not allowed to return for the remainder of the game.
- h. Players will bat the lineup until 3 outs have been made regardless of the number of times the lineup has been batted through.
- i. A player who shows up after the start of the game must be listed as the last player in the batting order. **If the player is not there by their turn at bat, they will be skipped with no penalty unless playing with 8 batters and an out occurs.** When the player shows up, they may bat their turn in the lineup.
- j. If a player bats out of order and the offense is caught while the player is still at bat and prior to a play being made, the lineup shall be corrected, and play will continue without penalty. Once a play has been made (base hit, walk, out, etc.) this rule will be null and void and play will continue without penalty. It is the duty of the coaches & scorekeepers to ensure that the correct players are at bat to avoid issues. The umpire shall enforce the rules but will not be responsible for monitoring lineups.

2.6 - Game Cancellations Due to Weather

- a. If a game is called due to weather (rain, lighting, etc.), light failure or other acts of God and cannot be resumed, it is a regulation game if four innings have been completed or three and half innings have been completed and the home team is leading.
- b. The home venue will oversee alerting teams in the events of cancellations or reschedules due to weather. This will be done through weather line updates, email, texts, or phone calls to coaches, and updated on the league website.
- c. Rescheduling of the game shall follow the guidelines set below:

A game that cannot be declared a regulation game, shall be declared a rain-out game. Coaches will be contacted by the home field Parks and Recreation Department to reschedule the game for a later date. Games that are cancelled due to weather are to be handled as follows:

1. Alton, Godfrey and Jerseyville will post on their rainout hotline by 4 pm. All teams playing in those towns are responsible for calling the hotline and finding out the status of the game.
- d. **HEAT DELAY/CANCELTION: Game cancelations/alterations will be based on the following:**
1. **A game time heat index of 105 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will result in postponement.**
 2. **A game time heat index of 100 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit will result in shortened games. Baseball/Softball: shortened to 1h 30m with no new inning beginning after 1h 15min.**
 3. **A game time heat index of 99 degrees Fahrenheit or lower will result in full length games.**

2.7 - Game Cancellations (Other than Weather)

- a. If a coach needs to cancel a game for any reason outside of weather, they will need to contact their associations scheduler/field manager and opposing coach outside of 48 hours of the date of the game to be canceled.
- b. Rescheduling of the game shall follow the guidelines set below:
Any team reporting a cancellation inside of 48 hours due to any reason other than weather shall be subject to forfeiture if the opposing team is not willing to reschedule.

2.8 - Rescheduling

- a. In the event of a reschedule, both teams will be contacted by the home field Parks and Recreation Department to work out a mutually agreed upon reschedule date including a few alternatives (if possible) using the online master schedule on Team Sideline.
- b. All coaches are required to have a working email. Please "Reply All" when responding to emails so that everyone can see responses.
- c. Both coaches will be given 1 week from the date of the cancellation to work out a reschedule date and contact the hometowns Scheduler/Field Manager via email/phone with the agreed upon date(s) to confirm availability.
- d. Once confirmed, the rescheduled date shall be updated via the online schedule.
- e. If coaches are unable to agree on a reschedule date within the 1 week requirement, then the game will be rescheduled for the first date that both teams are available per the online schedule.
- f. If one coach responds and the other doesn't within the 1 week requirement, the original game will be declared a forfeit for the non-responding coach with the win going to the responding coach. NOTE: A great deal of time goes into prepping fields, scheduling concession stand workers, scheduling umpires, etc. The RBSL will not waste money on these activities in lieu of a non-responsive coach by assuming you will show up to a rescheduled game that you haven't responded to. Please work with us to ensure that everyone has a positive experience.
- g. Any team failing to show up for a rescheduled game shall be declared as a forfeit and a win awarded to the other team in attendance.

2.9 - Coaches

- a. The maximum number of coaches allowed per team is 3.

- b. All coaches and managers need to be listed on the coach's roster as a coach or manager. Only coaches that are listed on the team roster are eligible to coach in the dugout. The only exception to this is in the absence of a coach, an adult (age 15 or older) may help assist in their place. A max of 3 coaches will still be always in effect.
- c. In the case of a coach's ejection, you may not bring in a substitute coach and/or parent to assist for the remainder of the game.
- d. The purpose of these rules is to eliminate anyone other than coaches and players being on the playing field or in the dugout. This assists the umpires in determining who should or should not be on the field.

2.10- Tie Breaker Rules

- a. If two teams are tied at the end of the season, the following tie breaker rules will be in effect.
 - 1. Head-to-head against each other
 - 2. Runs allowed against each other
 - 3. Run differential against each other
 - 4. Coin flip

3. Rules of Play (League By-laws)

3.0 - Courtesy Runner

- a. A courtesy runner will be allowed for the pitcher and catcher of record from the previous inning on defense. A courtesy runner may be used at any time regardless of the number of outs there are in the inning.
- b. The courtesy runner shall be the player who recorded the last BATTED out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the last batter in the lineup.
- c. If the last batted out is the pitcher or catcher, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batted out to said pitcher and/or catcher.
- d. Any one courtesy runner may only be used one time per inning. If a player must run a second time in one inning, the previous batted out prior to them shall be the courtesy runner.
- e. If a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement (if available) will be used without penalty. If no proper courtesy runner is available, the pitcher and/or catcher must run for themselves.

3.1 - Pitching

- a. There will be no pitch count limits for Softball.
- b. Once a starting pitcher is removed from the pitching position, they may re-enter the game as a pitcher 1 time per game.
- c. Any batter that is hit and the umpire deems as an intentional hit batter, the umpire may eject that pitcher from the game without warning.
- d. No pitches need to be thrown for an intentional walk. The manager/coach, pitcher, or catcher can request to intentionally walk a batter at any time during the at bat.
- e. No crow hopping. Umpires shall use their best judgment in determining crow hopping and shall apply this rule fairly for both teams holding them both to the same standard. A discussion with the umpires prior to the start of the game is recommended.
- f. A pitcher shall have up to 15 seconds to deliver a pitch upon receipt of the ball. Umpires shall use their best judgement in determining this and will time if necessary. Any pitcher taking greater than 15 seconds to deliver a pitch will be given a warning upon the first offense. For

every offense after that, a ball shall be called. The purpose of this rule is to avoid purposeful delays of game.

- g. A pitcher shall have the opportunity to pitch 10 balls to warm up for their first appearance on the mound. Every appearance after that they shall only have 5.
- h. On deck hitters should place themselves on whichever side of the on-deck area that is to the back side of the current batter at the plate. (Ex. An on-deck hitter should be positioned near the 3rd base side of the field if the at-bat hitter was batting right-handed. An on-deck hitter should be positioned near the 1st base side of the field if the at-bat batter was left-handed.)
- i. **12U & 14U:** When the catcher fails to catch the 3rd strike before it touches the ground AND there are less than 2 outs, AND 1st base is NOT occupied at the time of the pitch, OR there are 2 outs: the batter may attempt to become a batter-runner. **(Note: Does not apply to 10U)**

3.2 - Batting

- a. Batters will have up to 15 seconds to prepare for the pitch of the ball. (ex. taking signals from the 3rd base coach, practice swings, etc.) Time shall be started upon the pitcher's receipt of the ball. Batters should be back in the batter's box and prepared to take the next pitch upon the conclusion of 15 seconds. The purpose of this rule is to avoid purposeful delays of game.

3.3 - Charged Conferences

- a. Offense - 1 visit to the mound per pitcher per inning.
- b. Offense - On the 2nd visit to the mound in the same inning to a pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position.
- c. Defense - 3 per game (Either used in 1 inning or spread out across all innings)

3.4 - Player Contact

- a. Whenever a tag play is evident:
 - 1. A runner must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and/or catcher to avoid injury. Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and/or catcher shall not be interpreted as seeking to avoid contact and will result in the runner being out unless a player is laying prone on the ground in the runner's base path. Only then will this action be acceptable to avoid contact. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties both offensively and defensively.
 - 2. **A runner** must **NOT** slide head first into home plate.
 - 3. A defensive player shall not use excessive force when making contact with a player.
 - 4. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties both offensively and defensively.
- d. **Offensive Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion. Comment: When enforcing this rule, the umpire should judge the runner's intent. If the umpire feels the contact was unintentional, the runner should only be declared out. If the umpire feels the contact was intentional and/or malicious, the runner should be declared out and ejected from the game.
- e. **Defensive Penalty:** If the umpire feels the contact was intentional and/or malicious, the defensive player will be ejected from the game. Any outs that were made will stand.
- f. All base runners must stay within 3 feet of the baseline. Any runner moving outside of 3 feet to avoid a tag will be called out.

3.5 - Infield Fly Rule

- a. **14U:** A fair fly ball, not including a line drive or an attempted bunt, which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort when first & second or first, second, and third bases are occupied with less than two outs.
- b. To properly help to use the infield fly rule (and some other rules) and for safety and sportsmanship, infielders are first base, second base, third base, shortstop, pitcher, catcher. The 3 outfielders should be nearer than 15 feet from the baseline or the deepest positioned infielder in an approximate semi-circle. If the fly ball is dropped and the runners elect to try to advance, there is no force out on these runners, they must be tagged.
- c. **10U & 12U:** The infield fly rule will not be used.

4. Miscellaneous League Rules

4.0 - Field Protests

- a. There will be no field protests. Player eligibility protests only (see rule 6.03).

4.1 - Acceptable Behavior

- a. Coaches, Players and Fans shall conform to the RBSL Code of Conduct outlining acceptable behavior. All participants and parents will be required to sign a Code of Conduct prior to the start of the season. Umpires will have the final say in determining if someone isn't meeting the behavior standards and will be subject to ejection. The first offense will result in a warning. The second offense will result in ejection from the park.

4.2 - Ejections

- a. Any coach, player, parent, fan, etc. that is ejected must leave the confines of the sports complex immediately. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit.
- b. All ejections will be reviewed by the RBSL. Any coach getting an ejection may serve a game or multiple games suspension. Disciplinary action will be on a case-by-case basis due to the severity of the ejection/infraction of the coach, player or parent as determined by the RBSL.
- c. Abusive language or cursing shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in an automatic ejection.
- d. Throwing of equipment shall result in an automatic ejection.
- e. If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and/or be removed from the league.

4.3 - Field Rules

- a. When there is a game being played on any field regardless of age division, teams are not allowed to warm up in the outfield. Teams warming up must remain out of all 'in play territory'.
- b. The batting cages are on a first-come, first-serve basis for all RBSL teams. Teams shall be courteous when other teams are waiting to use the batting cages.
- c. No soft toss against the fences.
- d. Absolutely no alcohol or alcohol consumption is allowed within the Parks or at the Ball Fields.
- e. Food is not allowed in the dugouts. Coaches may bring coolers for water or cold towels in the dugouts. Dugouts should be cleaned out after each game.

5. Player Eligibility

5.0 - Player Eligibility

- a. For all age divisions, the birthday cutoff date is September 1st (See attached age chart).
- b. A player's minimum age division that they may participate with will be the age of that player on September 1st. This cutoff date will be strictly enforced. Example: If a player turns eleven years old on August 31st, that player must play in the 11u Division. If a player turns eleven years old on September 1st, that player may play in the 10u Division
- c. A player may play up in age divisions but may not play down in a lower age division.

5.1 - Official Rosters

- a. Each coach shall carry and present the official roster at the start of every game to the opposing team and umpire. It is recommended that coaches keep the official roster stapled inside of their teams scorebooks.
- b. An official roster shall be all that is needed to be carried by the coaches.
- c. Players may be added to the roster up until the start of the first game.

5.2 - Player Protest

- a. If a coach believes a player may not be of legal age, they may protest to the League Director. If the birth date on the certificate is within the league guidelines, no further actions shall be taken. If the offending player is deemed ineligible, the offending team will forfeit all games in which the offending player participated.

5.3 - Multiple Team Eligibility

- a. A player shall be permitted to participate on multiple teams but only one team per age division regardless of classification with the following exceptions.
- b. The player must pay a separate registration fee for each league division they will be playing, prior to the season starting.

6. COVID-19 GUIDELINES -- AS NEEDED ONLY. RBSL will only enforce Section 6 in the event of a state ordered mandate (region specific) should we regress into another Covid-19 outbreak.

6.1 - Phase 4(50 people or less)

- a. You must maintain the 6ft social distancing guidelines.
- b. Coaches must have a mask available, and it is highly encouraged to use it when situations occur that prevent 6ft social distancing between coach and player. (Interactions inside the dugout, passing each other inside the dugout)
- c. There will be a maximum of 2 coaches allowed on the field/dugout during games. The remaining players will need to be spread out along the dugout/bleachers that will be along the fence to show 6 ft separation. All benches will be marked at 6ft increments.
- d. All games will use one umpire who will be located behind the pitcher's mound. (Subject to Change)

- e. Umpires will remain within a pre-chalked box for the duration of the game. The box will be located at the normal 2nd position for umpires (offset to the pitcher's mound and offset from 2nd base). (Subject to Change)
- f. Gameplay conversations between coaches/umpires will need to take place during an inning transition, and the coach will speak to the umpire from their foul line, while the umpire remains in his/her chalk box.
- g. All Coaches will need to assign players to spots in dugout based on batting order.
- h. There will be no team water jugs, individual drinks only.
- i. Spectators must line the foul lines and outside the outfield fences (they must bring their own chair(s)).
- j. Groups of 50 people or less can be allowed for each team's fanbase, as long as each group of 50 can maintain 30ft from the other. Family groups are permitted to sit by each other in shorter distance than 6ft, however, each family group within the team fanbase must remain 6ft from the other.