



YOUTH SOFTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS 2026

All rules & interpretations will be covered under the National Championship Series (NCS) with the following emphasis and exceptions listed below. The Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff and the Youth Softball Committee set the rules and reserve the right to interpret the rules in the best interest of the Salina Parks & Recreation's Youth Softball League.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES:** To provide an opportunity for youth, of any skill level, who wish to play softball under proper supervision. The program stresses sportsmanship and character development. Softball skills are to be developed while maintaining an appreciation for clean, friendly competition and a true spirit of cooperation between sponsors, managers, players, parents/spectators and league officials.
2. **ORGANIZATION** - Leagues will be organized by the Recreation office consisting of six teams, playing double-round-robin schedules, whenever possible. All leagues will have a 10-game schedule played at Bill Burke Park. Leagues will be organized as follows:

<u>Fast Pitch Leagues:</u>	<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Pitching Distance</u>	<u>Base Distance</u>
8U (Coach Pitch)	Sept. 1, 2016 – August 31, 2018	35'	60'
10U (Fast Pitch)	Sept. 1, 2014 - Aug. 31, 2016	35'	60'
12U (Fast Pitch)	Sept. 1, 2013 - Aug. 31, 2014	40'	60'
14U (Fast Pitch)	Sept. 1, 2011 - Aug. 31, 2013	43'	60'

Age Cutoff: Softball age will be determined as of **August 31, 2025**. *Example:* If a player is 10 years old as of **August 31, 2025**, that player will be considered a 10U player for the **2026** season.

- a) **Minimum Age:** Participants must be at least 7 years old by August 31 of previous year or at least currently enrolled in 2nd grade to participate.
 - c) **Option:** All participants are encouraged to play in their respective age divisions, but have the option to bump up.
 - d) **Challenged:** Physically or mentally challenged players will be placed in a lower age group by Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff on a case-by-case basis.
3. **INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION:** Youth wishing to play softball who are legal residents of the City of Salina or Saline County currently not on a team will be placed on a team by filling out and returning a "Play Ball" form to the Parks & Recreation Department by the designated deadline. Temporary residents will be considered on the merits of their individual cases.
 4. **TEAM REGISTRATION:** Complete teams from inside and/or outside Salina may be accepted at the discretion of Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff.
 5. **TEAM REGISTRATION PROCESS:** All team managers shall file an official roster of players giving their first and last names, address & phone number. This roster, along with team fees, copies of all **NEW** players' birth certificates and the coach's background check forms must be submitted to the Parks & Recreation

Department before the entry deadline. All roster changes must be made through the Parks & Recreation Department.

- a) **Player Restrictions:** All players participating in Salina softball leagues are bound by rosters. No player may play on more than one (1) Salina league team during the same season. Those quitting from other softball programs may return to Recreation competition if they meet other eligibility requirements. No player will be allowed to return to a team once her name has been removed from the roster. A season begins with the first game in which a player plays.
- b) **Minimum Players:** Teams must carry a minimum of 11 players on their roster.
- c) **Maximum Players:** Teams may carry a maximum of 14 players on their roster. Less than minimum and more than maximum players must be approved by Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff.
- d) **Adding Players:** From games 1-5, players may be dropped and added, but added players must be approved by Parks & Rec. athletic staff before that player can participate. After the 5th game, no changes can be made to the roster.
- e) **Transferring Players:** Transfers from one team to another in the same league will not be permitted.
- f) **Ineligible Players:** Any team playing a player who is ineligible in any way will forfeit all games in which that player participated, and the player will be ineligible for the remainder of the season.
- g) **False Info:** Coaches guilty of recording false information on rosters will be suspended for the season.

6. EQUIPMENT:

- a) **Uniforms:** Shirts uniformly lettered and numbered, all of the same color, will be considered an official uniform. Matching visors and/or pants of the same color are optional.
- b) **Jewelry:** Players may wear small, secure studs or post jewelry above the chin, but no jewelry is permitted below the chin, including hoop earrings. Medical alert/religious medals are not considered jewelry and must be taped.
- c) **Shoes:** Shoes must be worn. Cleats are recommended but not required at any age level. Only rubber cleats allowed for 8U–14U divisions.
- d) **Gloves:** Gloves may be one solid color or multicolored as long as the color(s) are not the color of the ball being used in the game.
- e) **Helmets:** All batters and base runners shall wear a helmet with double ear flaps while on the playing field and dead ball situations. In addition, fast pitch leagues require a face mask. Chin straps not mandated. Refusal to wear such equipment will cause the batter or base runner to be declared "out."
- f) **Defensive Masks:** Masks/helmets with NOSCAE seal are legal to wear by defensive players.
- g) **Catchers:** Catchers MUST wear a protective helmet, mask with throat protector, body protector, and shin guards which offer protection to the kneecaps during all practices and games (Exception: Youth slow-pitch does not require shin guards). The hockey style face mask with extended protector is approved. Anyone under the age of 18 must wear a protective mask with throat guard when warming up a pitcher on or off the field.
- h) **Bats:** All wooden, metal or composite bats not exceedingly more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter of regulation size and weight (31 ½ oz) will be allowed except if located on the Non-Approved Bat List. Any bat deemed illegal because of cracks, spurs or dents will be removed from the game. Any player using an altered bat, the player and the bat will be ejected from the game.
- i) **Softballs:** The "Home Team" shall provide two (and any additional if needed) new or fairly used, optical-colored, leather covered softballs of good quality, uniform size and weight. Game balls shall be returned to the "Home Team" at the end of the game.
 - 1) **8U Coach Pitch & 10U Fast Pitch:** 11” optic colored .47 COR or under and 375lbs. compression or under.
 - 2) **12U – 18U Fast Pitch:** 12” optic colored .47 COR or under and 325lbs. compression or under.
- j) **Bases:** A safety base will be used at 1st in all leagues. Base runners must use the safety base on all occasions to avoid collisions.

7. **GAME SCHEDULES:** Once a game is scheduled, it will be played according to the date, time and place listed. No postponements or changes in the schedule will be allowed unless made by the Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff due to facility availability or inclement weather.
8. **DUGOUTS:** Team listed 1st on the schedule shall be the "Home Team" who occupies 3rd Base dugout. **Exception:** If a team is playing a double header, they will remain in the dugout occupied for the first game.
9. **GAME TIME:**
 - a) **Lineups:** A lineup must be presented to the scorekeeper at least (5) FIVE MINUTES before game time.
 - b) **Minimum Players:** Teams failing to field (7) seven players at the scheduled starting time will forfeit. If a team has at least seven (7) players present at game time, the game must be started on schedule. Under no circumstances shall a team forfeit a game for failing to finish the game with the same number of players they started with.
 - c) **Automatic Outs:** Will not be charged for a team playing with less than a full line-up and for an injured player.
 - d) **Adding Players:** Additional players may be added at the bottom of the line-up as they arrive.
 - e) **Forfeited Games:** The time reserved for forfeited games belongs to those who showed. They may use the diamond for practice or for a "pick up" game. If requested, officials should work such a game and shall call the game 10 minutes before the starting time of the following game.
 - f) **Rescheduled Games:** Games called due to inclement weather will be rescheduled as diamonds and schedules permit.
 - g) **Regulation Games:** Games that are not considered regulation or regulation tie games shall be replayed from the beginning. Original lineup may be changed when the game is replayed.

10. GAME

LENGTH:

<u>Leagues</u>	<u>Innings</u>	<u>Time Limit (No new innings after)</u>
8U - 12U Fast Pitch -	6	1 hour and 10 minutes
14U - 18U Fast Pitch -	7	1 hour and 10 minutes

Time: Game time begins after the pre-game conference of coaches & umpire(s). No new innings shall start after the designated inning and/or time is up.

Ties: If the game is tied after the designated inning and/or time, the game shall continue until a winner is declared (Exception: 8U coach pitch games may end in a tie!). The International Tie Breaker rule will apply.

11. COMPLETE GAMES: The legal number of complete innings to constitute an official game is:

- a) **8U - 12U Leagues:** 2.5 innings if the "Home Team" is ahead or 3 innings if the "Visiting Team" is ahead.
- b) **14U Leagues:** 4.5 innings if the "Home Team" is ahead or 5 innings if the "Visiting Team" is ahead.
- c) **Factors:** The above stated minimum number of innings shall constitute a game, regardless of the reason for discontinuation of play (This includes weather, darkness, etc. which is up to the umpire's discretion).

12. RUN RULES:

- a) **All Leagues:** Every half inning will consist of three (3) outs or six (6) runs, whichever occurs first. In the event the home team is behind by 7 or more runs in the last inning, the home team will have the option to call the game or bat until time limit expires.
- b) **8U - 14U Fast Pitch:** 12 run rule after 3 innings (2.5 if home team is ahead), 8 after 4 innings (3.5 if home team is ahead).

13. PRE-GAME WARM-UPS: Teams should be warmed up and ready to play by at least 5 minutes before game time. This can be performed outside the field, in the outfield and outside the infield foul lines if time permits. Under no circumstances shall batting, fielding or pitching be allowed on the playing field.

14. GROUND RULES: Each diamond has its own. These shall be explained by the umpire to both managers before each game.

15. GAME OFFICIALS:

- a) **Uniform:** All umpires shall wear uniforms designated by the Salina Parks & Recreation Athletic Staff and all necessary protective equipment to ensure their safety during the game.
- b) **Pre-game Conference:** The umpire(s) shall conduct a pre-game conference with the head coaches before every game.
- c) **Control:** The official scorekeeper and the umpire(s) shall be in complete charge of the game.
- d) **Time Limit:** The umpire(s) will oversee the time limit on the field. He or she will announce the start time of the first legal pitch, which in turn is written down in the score book by the scorekeeper.
- e) **1-Man System:** 8U Coach Pitch shall use a 1 umpire system.
- f) **2-Man System:** 10U & Over leagues shall use a 2-man system.
- g) **Substitutes Officials:** Officials shall be furnished for all league games. In those games that two umpires are assigned, and one fails to report, the other umpire shall work the game from whatever position he/she feels best to control the game. In games which one umpire is assigned and fails to report, a substitute umpire shall be assigned by the field supervisor and/or Umpire-In-Chief (UIC).

16. MANDATORY PLAYING RULES:

- a) **Minimum Playing Time:** Every youth who attends a scheduled game shall be entered in the batting line-up and play at least one inning in the field on or before the 3rd inning. Violations of this rule by players, parents, or other coaches will be thoroughly researched. Violations will result in:
 - 1) **1st Offense:** Forfeiture of game
 - 2) **2nd Offense:** Forfeiture of game and 1 game suspension for the head coach.
 - 3) **3rd Offense:** Forfeiture of game and season suspension for the head coach.
- b) **Practice/Game Attendance:** Unexcused absences for practices and/or games could reduce the amount of playing time, but the coach still must abide by the minimum playing time rule stated above.
 - 1) Under no circumstances should a player be penalized from softball participation because of her participation in other summer activities such as camps, vacations or other recreational/educational pursuits.

17. SUBSTITUTIONS:

- a) **Free Player Substitution:** An unlimited number of substitutions may be made at any time during the game. Every youth who attends a scheduled game shall be entered in the batting line-up.
 - a. **Defense:** Any 9 players (10 players for 8U Coach Pitch) may play defense at one time. However, the same batting line-up must be maintained throughout the game.
- b) **Pitcher Substitution:** A pitcher may be removed from the game and return as a pitcher, provided she occupies the same batting position in the line-up. Two (2) timeouts called in the same inning for conference with the pitcher shall constitute an automatic replacement of the pitcher. Excessive conferences with other players or coaches may be considered "stalling," which if continued excessively in the judgment of the umpire, could result in forfeiture of the game.
- c) **Courtesy Runners:** No courtesy runners are allowed except for a visibly injured player and for a catcher & pitcher. The runner shall be the player who made the last out.

18. STEALING:

- a) **Fast Pitch:** Base runners may advance when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand (Exception: 8U Coach Pitch).

19. THIRD STRIKE:

- a) **Fast Pitch:** (Dropped Third Strike Rule) The batter becomes the batter runner when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied or any time there are two outs (**Exception: 8U Coach Pitch & all 10U divisions**).

- 20. **AUTOMATIC WALKS:** If it is decided to walk a batter before the first pitch, she can be sent to first base without being pitched to. After the first pitch, she must be pitched to. This rule applies to all leagues except the 8U Coach Pitch League where there are no walks allowed.

21. INFIELD FLY RULE: The infield fly rule (runners on 1st & 2nd bases or 1st, 2nd & 3rd bases with less than 2 outs) is in effect for all fast pitch leagues, except 8U Coach Pitch and 10U.

22. SPECIAL RULES FOR REGULAR 10U: NCS 10U Rules followed:

- a) **Dropped Third Strike:** A batter is automatically "out" on a dropped third strike.
- b) **Infield Fly:** The infield fly rule will not be in effect. Batter is automatically "out."
- c) **Stealing:** Stealing is allowed to 2nd & 3rd base, however, the base runner may not lead off until the release of the pitch and can only steal one base per pitch. Runners may NOT steal home.
- d) **Walks:** Walks are awarded; however, the base runner cannot advance past first base.
- e) **Defense:** A regular defense will be played with 9 players, 3 positioned in the outfield

23. SPECIAL RULES FOR 8U COACH PITCH LEAGUE: NCS 8U Coach Pitch Rules followed:

- a) **Batting:** Batters will be allowed a maximum of 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. The umpire will give notification prior to the 5th pitch. The batter will receive an additional pitch per foul ball on or after the 5th pitch (Exception: Any foul tip caught by the catcher on or after 2 strikes and/or the 5th pitch is an out).
- a) **Walks:** There are no walks, and a batter does not get to take first base if hit by a pitch.
- b) **Bunting:** There is NO bunting.
- c) **Infield Fly:** The infield fly rule will not be in effect.
- d) **Defense:** A maximum of ten (10) players can be on defense at the same time. The extra player must be an outfielder. Outfielders must play straight away in the grass area at the time of the pitch. **Coaches/Assistant Coaches are permitted in the outfield, must remain in the grass.**
- e) **Coach-Pitcher:** The coach-pitcher shall be a member of the team's coaching staff and shall pitch the ball with 1 foot on the pitching rubber in an underhand motion to each batter of his/her team. At the umpire's discretion, he/she may allow the coach-pitcher to move forward from the pitching rubber but must keep both feet on pitching mat to deliver a hittable ball to the batter. The coach-pitcher shall be considered part of the playing field. If a batted ball hits the coach-pitcher, it is still a "live ball." Exception: In the judgement of the umpire, if the coach-pitcher deliberately interfered. (Effect: The ball will be declared dead, out made on the batter and all runners will return to the last base occupied).
- f) **Player-Pitcher:** Shall be a member of the playing team and not pitch to the batters. The player-pitcher must be in the proximately of the pitchers' circle or 1 foot inside the circle when the ball is released. The player must be stationary and not forward of the pitching rubber when the ball is released.
- g) **Base Runners:** Base Runners may leave a base after the pitcher releases the ball. No Stealing is allowed.
- h) **Overthrow Rule:**
 - 1) **Foul Territory:** Only (1) base on an overthrow when the ball goes into foul territory. Example: If a batter-runner hits the ball to the infield, the fielder throws to 1st or 3rd base and the ball goes into foul territory: The ball is live, the base runner(s) may advance as many bases as they wish, with the liability of being put out.
 - 2) **The batter-runner will only receive one base on an overthrow. After time has been called, the umpire will properly place the runners at the proper bases.**
- i) **Time:** "TIME" will be called by the umpire after every play. "TIME" is a judgment call by the umpire and should be called when:
 - 1) Play has ceased and runners are not obviously advancing.
 - 2) The ball becomes in possession of a defensive player in the path area ahead of the runner(s).
 - 3) No play is being made on another base.

****NOTE:** The purpose of the 8U Coach Pitch and 10U Leagues are to develop player fundamentals. Both leagues allow the batter more and better chances to hit the ball, which in return allows the defense to have more chances to field, throw and catch the ball. Coaches can focus more on the fundamentals of the game as opposed to one or two pitchers trying to throw strikes.

PROTESTS: Protests must be in writing and submitted to Recreation office no later than 24 hours after alleged violation (except Friday games, which must be submitted Monday). The chief umpire and scorekeeper

must be notified, at the time, the remainder of the game is being played under protest. Eligibility protests may be filed any time up to 24 hours after completion of the final league game. No protest will be allowed on judgment calls.

24. GRIEVANCES: All protests, grievances, rule interpretations and issues must be submitted in writing to the Athletic Supervisor (Judgment calls are not to be construed as a rule interpretation). Judgment calls during a game, or any action of disciplinary nature taken by an umpire will be supported by Parks & Recreation Staff.

25. COACHES & MANAGERS:

- a) **Background Check:** All coaches must submit and pass a background check before being allowed to coach any Salina Parks & Recreation youth athletic team. This includes but not limited to: routinely being present in the dugout and on the field during practices and/or games.
- b) **Certification:** It is mandatory that the head coach or manager from each team be certified by the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) certified to coach. Managers and coaches shall always provide good sportsmanship and shall be responsible for the conduct of their players, other coaches, parents and spectators. Salina Parks & Recreation has the right to refuse, revoke or remove coaches' NYSCA certification based on a coach's failure to comply with the NYSCA Coaches Code of Ethics. Any coach whose membership is revoked by the NYSCA will not be permitted to coach any Salina Parks & Recreation youth activity until their certification is reinstated.
- c) **Maximum:** Each team is allowed a maximum of 4 coaches during games.

26. CONDUCT: All players, coaches, managers, spectators and staff are expected to display good sportsmanship and conduct, (See attached code of ethics for coaches & code of conduct for parents / spectators) Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but not limited to:

- a) Use of profane language directed towards any staff member, official, player and/or spectator
- b) Arguing, bickering, heckling or excessive display of emotion towards an umpire or staff.
- c) Making unnecessary gestures toward game participants, umpires or spectators.
- d) Throwing equipment; resorting to unnecessary roughness on the playing field.
- e) Full-backing and crash plays, which also results in the runner's ejection from the game.

27. Salina Parks & Recreation Disciplinary Procedures: Coach, Player or Spectator

- a) **Ejections:** Depending on the severity, staff or the umpire have the right to issue a warning or ejection.
 - 1) Once a coach, adult player or spectator has been ejected from the game, he or she has 2 minutes to leave the facility (sight and sound) or the police will be called. Failure to comply will result in the game being declared a forfeit.
 - 2) Once a youth player has been ejected from the game, she shall be restricted to the dugout with coach supervision or released to a parent/guardian.
- b) **1st Ejection:** Results in a one (1) week suspension from the date of the incident from playing or coaching any SPRD sponsored team, league or tournament in which the individual is a member (adult and/youth). The suspension can carry over into the 1st week of the following playing session/season.
- c) **2nd Ejection:** Results in a two (2) week suspension from the date of the incident from playing or coaching any SPRD sponsored team, league or tournament in which the individual is a member (adult and/or youth). In addition, the individual may not spectate at such facility/event during the suspension. The suspension can carry over into the first two weeks of the following playing session/season. The individual will be required to meet with the SPRD disciplinary review committee prior to reinstatement.
- d) **3rd Ejection:** Results in a one (1) year suspension from the date of the incident from playing or coaching any SPRD sponsored team, league, tournament and/or event (adult and/or youth). In addition, the individual may not spectate at such facility/event during the suspension. The individual will be required to meet a SPRD disciplinary review committee prior to reinstatement.
- e) Depending on the severity of the offense(s), individuals may be subject to additional sanctions and/or permanently banned from all Recreation Department activities.

- 28. LAW VIOLATIONS:** Violations of any law (battery, assaulting an umpire or SP&R representative, possession of illegal substances including consumption of alcohol by minors, disorderly conduct, damage to property, etc.) by players, coaches, managers, or spectators during practices, league games and/or tournaments will result in immediate removal from the facility and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent through all legal channels.
- 29. BANNED SUBSTANCES:** Smoking or the use of tobacco products are prohibited in the fields, dugouts, bleachers or immediate vicinity of the playing area. Consumption of alcohol at any recreational youth baseball or softball activity (game, practice or team function) is strictly prohibited.
- 30. INCLEMENT WEATHER:** Any games postponed or canceled due to inclement weather will be announced on RecZone (receive text/e-mail by subscribing to RecZone at www.salina-ks.gov/parksandrecreation). Coaches, players, spectators and staff shall follow weather policies and procedures established by Salina Parks & Recreation.
- 31. LEAGUE TIE-BREAKER PROCEDURE:** The procedure for teams who are tied in league/division is as follows:
- a) League/Division win/loss record
 - b) Head to head games
 - c) Non-division win/loss record
 - d) Runs given up in head to head games
 - e) Runs scored in head to head games
 - a) Coin Flip

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics:

- ◆ I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- ◆ I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- ◆ I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- ◆ I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- ◆ I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- ◆ I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- ◆ I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- ◆ I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- ◆ I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
- ◆ I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

PARENT/SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction: The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."

I therefore agree:

- ◆ I will not force my child to participate in sports.
- ◆ I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
- ◆ I will inform my coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.

- ◆ I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
- ◆ I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or other sporting event.
- ◆ I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player or parent, such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
- ◆ I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
- ◆ I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- ◆ I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- ◆ I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- ◆ I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard and make my child feel like a winner every time he/she participates.
- ◆ I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participant for making a mistake or losing in a competition.
- ◆ I will emphasize the importance of skill development and regular practice with younger players, and how they will benefit my child more than an emphasis on winning and competition.
- ◆ I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
- ◆ I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss or confront coaches at the game field. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- ◆ I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- ◆ I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.

-Adapted from National Youth Sports Safety Foundation 3/26/02