



SSA Interlock 8U-14U All-Star Tournament Rules

These Guidelines and Rules are for the Spring 2026 Sanger Softball Association Interlock All-Star tournament. The interlock will schedule meetings each year to finalize or revise these guidelines and rules for each season.

The All-Star tournament will be organized by hosting associations and representatives of the interlock for the purpose of playing under an established set of guidelines and rules in order to provide an organized recreational All-Star tournament for softball players. The mission is to implement and develop teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship. The objective is to provide tournament play that will be fun, safe, and competitive.

The interlock committee determines how many teams will be entered per age division.

TOURNAMENT RULES

- 1) The tournament will follow rules established by USA Softball, as modified by the following supplemental rules established by the SSA Interlock Committee.
- 2) Warm-ups are only permitted where the host association allows. Hitting may only happen in batting cages or on the field.
- 3) Each team must supply 2 game balls at the beginning of the game, they must be approved by the umpires.
- 4) Home team will be determined at the plate with a coin flip.
- 5) The home team will be responsible for keeping the official score of the game, using an official score book. The scorekeeper will sit behind home plate and must know how to score keep. If the team cannot provide a scorekeeper, they will forfeit the home team position.
- 6) Teams are responsible for cleaning up their dugouts after each game.
- 7) No **METAL** cleats.
- 8) Players must wear batting helmets when batting, running bases, or in the on-deck circle. Do not remove helmets until inside the dugout. Batting helmets must have a face mask for 8u and under.
- 9) Catchers are required to wear full protective headgear, mask, chest protector and shin guards.
- 10) Defense Face masks must be worn for all ages and all cities. 10U-14U are allowed to have outfielders **not** wear defense face masks, but infield must.
- 11) No jewelry (rings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.) will be allowed during play.
- 12) For 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U - Any bats labeled Tee Ball or Baseball will not be allowed during the game. Those bats will be turned over to the tournament director and will be returned after the last tournament game for that team.
- 13) All bats must have the USA/ASA or USSSA approved certification mark and must not be listed on the banned bat list. Those bats will be turned over to the tournament director and will be returned after the last tournament game for that team.



14) 10U, 12U, and 14U Coaches are not allowed to stand outside the dugout while their team is on defense or offense. Only the first base and third base coaches are allowed to be in the coach's box. All coaches in the dugout or on the field must be listed on the official team roster.

8U coaches should have a coach behind the plate to help catcher with passed pitches, along with 2 defense coaches in the outfield.

15) Game Balls

- a) Optic yellow 11" safety ball with Level 1 core will be used for 6U games.
- b) Optic yellow 11" hard balls with a max COR of .47 will be used for 8U and 10U games.
- c) Optic yellow 12" hard balls with a max COR of .47 will be used for 12U and 14U games.

16) Batter's box will be 7' x 3' on both sides of home plate.

17) If there is a tie at the end of the game for 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat. Batter should start with a 0-0 count and:

8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U will follow the Overtime Format:

- a) First extra inning – start with 1 out and runner on 2nd base
- b) Second extra inning – start with 2 outs and runners on second and third base.
- c) Third and additional extra innings – start with 2 outs and bases loaded.
- d) This will continue until a winner is determined.
- e) Base runners will be based on last plate appearance according to the line-up card.

18) Lineups will be given to the plate umpire at the plate meeting.

19) Teams will bat their entire roster and be allowed free defensive substitutions.

20) 8U teams must have at least seven (7) players to start a game. 10U-14U must have at least eight (8) players to start a game. No automatic out for not enough players.

21) Sliding into the base feet first is allowed. Sliding headfirst at any base is not allowed and that player will be called out **(diving back to the base is allowed)**.

22) The run rule per half inning for 8U is **5 runs**. The run rule per half inning for 10U, 12U, and 14U is **6 runs**.

23) Game will be called when a team is mathematically out.

The run rule for fast pitch is:

- 12 at the end of the 3rd inning
- 10 at the end of the 4th inning
- 8 at the end of the 5th inning.

24) Time outs will be allowed per the rule book for that age division.

25) All buckets and equipment must be inside the dugout during the game.



26) Game Duration for 6U and 8U games will be **60-minute**, finish the inning with tie break (see above). 10U-14U games will be 75-minutes, finish the inning with tie break (see above).

27) Team conference at change of half innings is not allowed. First infraction will be a warning, second infraction will be ejection of coach.

28) Implementing a "Mercy Rule", if a team has not been able to bat all their players, they will be able to before game has ended. To allow all registered players the opportunity to hit in the tournament.

31) Coaching Etiquette:

- Judgment calls made by the umpire are not up for appeal. Please do not argue with the umpires. This only delays the game and presents a bad image to the players and parents. However, a head coach may respectfully request an official to consult with partner to determine if he/she had a better view of the play.
- The umpires have been instructed to warn any argumentative coach, player or parent (1) one time. After that the umpire has the authority to remove said person(s) from the park. Umpires will notify a tournament director of the ejection.
- Coaches cannot touch a base runner during live ball. Penalty: 1st occurrence is a warning, 2nd time is an out.
- Zero Tolerance is in affect at all sites, and all games during the tournament.

32) PROTESTS

- There will be a \$50 protest fee, for any Head Coach that declares a protest during the tournament.
- A formal protest may only be made regarding rules.
- Only the Head Coach, as listed on the official team roster, is allowed to notify the plate umpire of a formal protest, BEFORE the next pitch is thrown.
- The clock will stop and the protest committee will be called in.
 - NO protest can be called after the completion (last official out) of the game.
 - The Protest Committee will consist of the Tournament Director (or appointed representative), SSA Director/Assistant Director and one INTERLOCK representative.
 - Protest Committee decisions are FINAL!

*****PLEASE READ AND BE FAMILIAR WITH THE OFFICIAL RULE BOOKS!*****

33) UMPIRES

- All Umpires must be registered with a recognized organization of officials such as DFW Fastpitch, Over the Plate, etc.
- No requests for umpires can be made. Parents and/or coaches will have NO INPUT as to the officials assigned to any game.
- All 8U and up games will be two (2) umpire mechanics. If an umpire is not available or cannot continue with the game,



one umpire mechanics will go into effect and the game will continue.

34) **CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 1) Zero tolerance policies are in effect at every complex. Any player, manager, coach or fan ejected from a game must leave the facility immediately and not be allowed to participate that same day. During the suspension, the ejected person may not be at the facility.
- 2) In addition to the above suspension, if a coach or spectator is ejected from a game, they will not be allowed back in the dugout or field as a coach for the remainder of the tournament. The coach, player and spectator could be appealed to the Tournament Director and can be overturned, with conditions.
- 3) There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages at any facility at any time.
- 4) Smoking, vapor or tobacco use is prohibited at any facility at any time.
- 5) Cheering words of encouragement to your team players is acceptable (we do not expect you to be meek) as long as it is NOT done in a manner that provokes.
- 6) Profane language at any game is unacceptable behavior.
- 7) Harassing or "name calling" of any softball official, players from either team, coaches from either team, etc., either at the facility or on social media, is NOT ACCEPTABLE and WILL NOT BE TOLERATED as well as by the corresponding host youth organization.
- 8) The parents/guardians will support the coaches' rules and decisions. As parents/guardians one realizes that this is a game for children - NOT professional athletes.
- 9) If the opposing team's spectators are breaking the rules, it DOES NOT mean that you are entitled to break the rules or to follow suit in unacceptable behavior. Please remember that two wrongs do not make a right.
- 10) Finally, the parents/guardians will always exhibit and support sportsmanship to his or her best ability.



Specific Age Group Overlay's to USA Rules:

8 & Under - Modified Coach Pitch

Playing Field:

- Bases will be 60' apart and the official pitching rubber will be 35' from home.

Game Play:

- Each team will provide their own pitching coach. The coach pitcher must be listed as a coach on the official team roster.
- Coaches will pitch all innings and must pitch from the 35' rubber. Coaches are encouraged to pitch as flat a pitch as possible. The child pitcher must also remain 35' from the home plate.
- Coach pitcher must have one foot on the pitching mound at time of release and both feet must be within 24" of the mound.
- The child pitcher must be positioned on either the right or left side of the pitching rubber and be no more 3' from the rubber when a coach pitcher is pitching.
- Batters will receive a maximum of **5 pitches** to put the ball in play or strike out. No foul outs, no walks, and no hit by pitch (HBP).
- A final pitch that is fouled off does not count toward the pitch count and an additional pitch(es) may be thrown. EXCEPTION: If the catcher catches a foul tip of the final pitch, the batter is out.
- Pitched ball is dead when it hits the ground prior to home plate. Batter cannot hit a ball that first touches the ground.
- The coach pitcher cannot go to the plate and give instructions to the batter. This causes delays in the game.
- Once the ball is hit fair, the coach pitcher must move to the side of the field, the opposite direction of where the ball was hit. When the coach interferes with an offensive player, then the play stands. When the coach unintentionally interferes with a defensive player, then the umpire has the option to call a base runner out, if intentional, then the runner will be called out.
- The offense is allowed two (2) base coaches and (1) pitcher. The coaches must remain inside the circle or coaching boxes when talking to the batters.
- The defense will be allowed to have two (2) coaches positioned in the outfield to help instruct the outfielders, and teams should provide one (1) defensive coach at the fence behind the catcher to help keep the game moving.
- A team must have at least seven (7) players to start a game. Ten (10) players should assume defensive positions on the field. Each team is allowed: (1) pitcher, (1) catcher, (4) infielders and (4) outfielders. If less than 7 players are present, then it is a forfeit.
- Teams playing with only eight (8) or nine (9) players shall not incur an automatic out when the ninth (9th) or tenth (10th) batting position arises. The 1st batter will then bat without penalty to the team.
- Infielders must remain at least 45' from home plate when the ball is pitched.
- Infielders must make an attempt to make the play at a base, rather than outfielders making the initial play. For example, the 1st baseman should not field the ball, then turn around and throw the ball to the right fielder who has run to 1st base to make the play.
- The umpire will declare the play over when the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle and a play is not being made. If the pitcher makes a motion to continue play, the umpire shall allow the play to continue. Base runners will advance to the next base if over halfway to that base or return to the previous base



touched if less than halfway.

- There is no penalty for an overthrow. Runners may advance to any base including home.
- The umpire will not call a play dead just because a defensive player returns the ball to the coach pitcher. The intent of this rule is to have coaches instruct players how to properly stop runners from advancing to the next base. To facilitate this, coach pitchers should move to foul territory near the first or third base line (away from the play) after the ball is batted into fair territory. If a defensive player gives the ball to the coach pitcher during a live play, the play will be called dead and each base runner will be awarded an additional base.
- A player's intentional contact with an opposing player will result in the immediate ejection of the offending player. Serious infractions may result in suspension from the league. Umpires will notify a board member of the hosting city in the event of any ejection.
- No Bunting Allowed.
- No stealing. Runners may not lead.
- The lookback rule will not be in effect.
- Infield fly rule will not be in use.
- Dropped 3rd strike not in effect.
- Defense Face masks must be worn for all ages and all teams. 10U-14U are allowed to have outfielders **not** wear defense face masks, but infield must.



10 & Under

Playing Field:

- Bases will be 60' apart and the official pitching rubber will be 35' from home plate.

Game Play:

- Nine (9) players should assume defensive positions on the field. Each team is allowed: (1) pitcher, (1) catcher, (4) infielders and (3) outfielders.
- Teams playing with only (8) eight players shall NOT incur an automatic out when the 9th batting position arises. A team must have at least (8) eight players to start a game. Any less than 8 is an automatic forfeit.
- Once the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitcher's circle, all base runners must either advance to the next base or return to the base they just came from immediately. Any hesitation or fake moves by the runner and they will be called out by the umpire.
- Base runners are allowed to leave the base only after the pitcher has released the ball.
- A player's intentional contact with an opposing player will result in the immediate ejection of the offending player. Serious infractions may result in suspension from the tournament and/or league. Umpires will notify a tournament director in the event of any ejection.
- Bunting is allowed. **If a batter has 2 strikes, and tries to bunt, and it is called foul, it is an out.**
- Infield fly rule will be used.
- **Dropped third strike is in effect.** In the event of a passed ball on third strike or dropped third strike, the may advance to first if:
 - **Less than two outs, first base occupied:** The batter is automatically out, even if the catcher drops the ball.
 - **Less than two outs, first base unoccupied:** The batter can be put out by being tagged or thrown out at first base.
 - **Two outs:** The batter can be put out by being tagged or thrown out at first base, regardless of whether first base is occupied.
 - * Even if batter starts to return to dugout, as long as she does not step foot in dugout, she can run to 1stbase. If coming from 3rd base side, batter can run straight across the ball field towards 1st creating their own path.
- Defense Face masks must be worn for all ages and all cities. 10U-14U are allowed to have outfielders **not** wear defense face masks, but infield must.



Fast Pitch – 12u & 14u

Playing Field:

- Bases will be 60' apart and the official pitching rubber will be 40' from home plate for 12u & 43' for 14u

Game Play:

- Nine (9) players should assume defensive positions on the field. Each team is allowed: (1) pitcher, (1) catcher, (4) infielders and (3) outfielders.
- (8) eight players shall NOT incur an automatic out when the 9th batting position arises. A team must have at least (8) eight players to start a game. Any less than 8 is an automatic forfeit.
- Overthrows, whether in foul or fair territory, will be considered live, unless the ball enters the dugout or any other area deemed out of play, in which case, each runner will automatically receive (2) two bases from the time of the throw (the base you are going to, plus 1 more). Overthrows remaining in play will be considered live, and runners may advance at their own risk of being put out.
- Once the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitcher's circle, all base runners must either advance to the next base or return to the base they just came from immediately. Any hesitation or fake moves by the runner and they will be called out by the umpire.
- Base runners are allowed to leave the base only after the pitcher has released the ball. Base runners are allowed to steal any base and may steal home on a wild pitch or passed ball.
- Bunting is allowed. **If a batter has 2 strikes, and tries to bunt, and it is called foul, it is an out.**
- A player's intentional contact with an opposing player will result in the immediate ejection of the offending player. Serious infractions may result in suspension from the league. Umpires will notify a board member in the event of any ejection.
- Infield fly rule will be used.
- There is a dropped third strike provision. The batter may advance to first base upon a dropped third strike, provided that 1st base is unoccupied.
- Defense Face masks must be worn for all ages and all cities. 10U-14U are allowed to have outfielders **not** wear defense face masks, but infield must.