

# Youth Softball League Rules

Spring 2026

Celina, Gunter, Pilot Point, Tioga, Whitesboro

- A player's age on August 31, 2025 will determine the division she qualifies to play in for the 2026 season.

## **2026 Softball Division Cutoffs**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Birth Year Range</b>
6U	2019-2020
8U	2017-2018
10U	2015-2016
12U	2013-2014
14U	2011-2012

# Rules for All Divisions – Softball

All divisions are governed by ASA / USSSA Fastpitch Softball rules except for the exceptions and highlights listed below.

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## 1. Uniforms / Equipment

### A. Uniforms

- Jerseys must match.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Player numbers are required on the back.

### B. Jewelry

- No jewelry allowed.
- Exception: Earrings may be covered before the game begins.

### C. Bats

- Must be ASA / USSSA certified.
- T-ball bats are allowed for 6U.

### D. Helmets

- All batters and runners must wear NOCSAE-approved helmets with face masks.

### E. Cleats

- Cleats are encouraged but not required.
- Rubber cleats only.
- No metal spikes.

### F. Catchers

- Must wear NOCSAE-approved helmet with ear coverage, mask, chest protector, and shin guards.

### G. Pitchers

- Must wear a protective face mask.
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## 2. General Rules

- Maximum of **5 runs per inning** (including playoffs where applicable).
- Home team keeps the official scorebook.
- Visiting team operates the scoreboard.
- Lineups must be submitted to the umpire and opposing coach before or at the plate meeting.

### Mercy Rule

- 12-run lead after 3 innings.
  - 8-run lead after 4 innings.
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## Batting Order / Lineup

- Continuous batting order required.
- Minimum of **8 players** to start and finish without penalty.
- If a team drops to **7 players or fewer** at any point, the game is immediately declared a forfeit win for the opposing team.
- No automatic out if the 9th batting position is vacant at the start of the game.
- If a batting spot becomes vacant after an at-bat is recorded (injury, sickness, etc.), that spot becomes an automatic out for future at-bats.

### Courtesy Runner

- Allowed for pitcher or catcher.
- Runner = last batted out.
- If last batted out was pitcher/catcher, use the previous available out.

### Incorrect Batting Order

- Discovered before the at-bat is completed → correct batter assumes the count.
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## 3. Rain-Shortened Games

A game is complete if:

- 3 innings are completed (or 2.5 innings if the home team is ahead), OR
- 45 minutes have elapsed.

Suspended games resume at the point of suspension.

The home team confirms the time, score, and batting order with the umpire and opposing team before resuming.

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## **4. Substitute Runner Rule**

- A pinch runner may be used for the pitcher or catcher anytime they are on base.
  - Runner = last batted out (or last batter in lineup if no outs have been recorded).
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## **5. Game Clock**

- Games are timed by division.
  - No inning may begin with zero time remaining.
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## **6. Coaches**

- Up to 4 coaches allowed in the dugout.
  - No arguing judgment calls.
  - Unruly coaches will be ejected and suspended for at least one game.
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## **7. Team Responsibilities**

- Home team: Official scorebook and game balls.
  - Visiting team: Operates scoreboard.
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## **8. Sportsmanship**

- Coaches are responsible for player and parent behavior.
  - Disrespect or poor sportsmanship may result in removal from the facility.
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## **9. Pitching Rule**

- Pitchers need only one foot on the pitching rubber to begin their pitching motion.
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## **10. Protest Rule**

- Only league rule interpretations may be protested.
  - Judgment calls cannot be protested.
  - Umpire consults supervisor/commissioner for final decision.
  - If no supervisor is present, the umpire's decision is final.
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## **11. Participation**

- No player sits two innings in a row.
  - No player sits twice before every player has sat once.
  - Continuous lineup required — entire roster bats.
  - Exceptions allowed if requested by a parent for medical or behavioral reasons.
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## **12. Guest Players (Regular Season Only)**

- Maximum of 2 guest players.
- Team may not exceed 9 total players with guest additions.
- Guest players must be from the same town as the team needing players.
- Must be approved by the commissioner before the game starts.
- Must be identified to the opposing coach at the plate meeting.

Guest Players:

- Wear their own team jersey.
- Play right field.
- Bat last in the lineup.
- If a rostered player arrives after the game starts, they replace a guest player.

# 6U – T-Ball Rules

## Playing Field

- Base paths: **60 feet**
- Pitching distance: **35 feet**
- A dashed line will be marked at **45 feet** for infield positioning.

## Equipment

- Home team provides the batting tee.
- Official ball: **10” safety ball with Level 1 core.**
- Batters and players in the on-deck circle must wear helmets (chinstraps not required). Helmets stay on until inside the dugout.
- **No jewelry allowed.**
- T-Ball is instructional — focus on fundamentals and fun.

## Game Play

- Games are **60 minutes**. No new inning starts after time expires.
- Home team may complete its at-bat if time expires.
- Score is kept, but development is the priority.
- **Max 5 runs per inning.**
- Teams bat their full lineup each inning. Bases clear after 3 outs.
- No bunting.
- Slinging the bat = strike.
  - 1 warning per player.
  - Second offense = out.
- No stealing. Runners cannot lead off. Runner is out for leaving early.
- Ball thrown over fence/into dugout = runner advances one base.
- Overthrow at first base = batter/runner may advance one base at own risk.
- Play stops when the pitcher has possession inside the circle.
- Runners must have one foot past halfway to advance once play is stopped.
- **Max two timeouts per inning.**
- Injury = play stops immediately.
- Headfirst slides allowed.

## Defensive Positions

- All players play defense.
- Pitcher must play in back half of pitching circle.

- Infielders must be at least 45' from home.
- Must field a catcher.
- Remaining players play in the outfield behind baselines.
- No minimum roster to play.

## Pitching / Fielding Rules

- If pitcher fields the ball, they must throw to a base or catcher to record an out.
- Pitcher cannot tag runners or run to bases for an out.
- Ball must be thrown (no rolling).
- Throw must be overhand.

## Participation

- Players cannot sit two innings in a row or twice before everyone sits once.
- Rotate last batter each game.
- Pitcher and first baseman may only play that position for one inning per game.
- Roster size: **6–10 players**.

## Coaching Etiquette

- No protests — resolve issues at game time.
  - Coaches/players must clean up after games.
  - Coaches cannot physically assist runners.
    - 1st offense = warning
    - 2nd offense = out
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# 8U – Coach Pitch

## Field

- Bases: **60 feet**
- Pitching rubber: **35 feet**
- Coach must pitch from the rubber (no floating rubber).

## Equipment

- Official ball: **11" hard ball (.44 medium core)**.
- Helmets required for batters/on-deck.
- Catchers must wear full gear.
- Pitchers must wear protective mask (strongly recommended for infielders).

- No jewelry.

## Pitching

- Batter gets **6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes**.
- Foul on 6th pitch = at-bat continues.

## Game Play

- Game length: **60 minutes or 6 innings**.
- No new inning after time expires.
- Max **5 runs per inning**.
- Teams must have at least **8 players** to start.
- Defensive alignment: 1 pitcher, 1 catcher, 4 infielders, 4 outfielders.
- Teams batting 8 or 9 players do NOT take automatic outs.
- Teams bat entire roster.

## Defensive Coaching

- 2 coaches allowed in outfield.
- 1 coach positioned behind catcher to keep game moving.
- Coaches cannot interfere with play.

## Key Rules

- Infielders must attempt plays at bases.
- Outfielders must stay behind baselines and off bases.
- Play is dead when an infielder has possession inside baselines and no play is developing.
- If the player 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.
- If ball is returned to coach pitcher during live play → play dead → runners advance one base.
- Intentional contact = ejection.
- No bunting.
- No stealing.
- Infield fly rule not used.
- Headfirst slides allowed.

## Coaching Etiquette

- No arguing judgment calls.
- Warning → Removal from park.
- No touching runners during live play.
- Clean up after games.

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## Guest Players (8U Applies)

- Max **2 guest players per game**.
- Must be registered in your association or partnered league.
- Parent permission required.
- Must wear own uniform.
- Announce to umpire and opposing coach before game.
- Play outfield only.
- Bat last.
- Cannot play if regular roster player is available.

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## 10U –MODIFIED Kid Pitch (No Drop Third Strike)

### Field

- Bases: **60 feet**
- Pitching: **35 feet**

### Equipment

- Official ball: **11" fastpitch (.47 core)**.
- Helmets required.
- Catchers must wear full gear.
- No jewelry.

### Game Length

- **75 minutes or 6 innings**.
- No new inning after time expires.
- Max **5 runs per inning**.
- Tie games do not go into extra innings.

### Pitching Rules

- Player pitches.
- After **4 balls**, coach pitches remaining strike count.

- Coach pitches underhand from 35’.
- No walks.
- Batter must hit ball to advance.
- Hit by pitch (avoiding contact) = first base.
- If pitcher is replaced twice in a game for HBP issues → removed for rest of game.
- Coach must exit field immediately after ball is hit.
- Coach interference or contact with ball = no pitch.
- Ball hitting coach = no pitch.

## Base Running

- Stealing allowed.
- No stealing when coach pitching.
- No stealing home.
- Runners may advance one base per pitch.
- Runners on third cannot score on overthrows.
- Play stops when ball is controlled inside pitcher’s circle.
- Look-back rule not in effect.
- No bunting when coach pitching.

## Defense

- 10 players: 1 pitcher, 1 catcher, 4 infielders, 4 outfielders.
- Must have 8 players to start (no automatic out for 9th batter if short).
- Teams bat entire roster.

## Other Rules

- Max **5 runs per inning**.
- Intentional contact = ejection.
- Headfirst slides allowed.
- Infield fly rule not used.
- Coaches cannot touch runners (warning → out).

# 12U – Kid Pitch

## Field

- Bases: **60 feet**
- Pitching: **40 feet**

## Equipment

- Official ball: **12" fastpitch (.47 core)**.
- Helmets required.
- Catchers full gear.
- No jewelry.

## Game Length

- **75 minutes or 7 innings**
- No extra innings for ties.
- **Max 5 runs per inning.**

## Defense

- 9 players: 1 pitcher, 1 catcher, 4 infielders, 3 outfielders.
- Must have 8 players to start.
- Teams bat entire roster.

## Rules

- Runners leave base after pitch is released.
- Once ball returns to pitcher's circle — runners must advance or return immediately.
- Bunting allowed.
- Infield fly rule used.
- Dropped third strike not in effect (batter out, cannot advance).
- Intentional contact = ejection.
- Headfirst slides allowed.
- No jewelry.

