

Junior (15U) Softball Rules

The Field

- Bases will be 60 feet.
- Pitching rubber will be at 40 feet.

Game Ball

- Players will use a 12" standard compression softball.

Player Equipment

- All players must be in full uniform (jersey and pants) to participate.
- Hanging jewelry (earrings, necklaces, etc.) is not allowed.
- All batters, on-deck batters, and base runners are required to wear protective batting helmets at all times. Face cages on batting helmets are strongly encouraged.
- **Pitchers are required to wear a fielding/safety mask.** Players at other positions may also wear masks at their own discretion.
- Catchers must wear all standard protective gear, including a catcher's helmet that covers the entire head and face. Junior players may *not* wear a batting helmet with a face cage in lieu of a catcher's mask.

Roster Management

- A team must be able to field a minimum of 8 players. Once both teams have at least 8 players, the game must start.
- In the event that one team cannot field the minimum within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the team will forfeit the contest. However, following the recording of the official forfeit, the players in attendance will still be allowed to scrimmage, with mixed teams permitted.
- Borrowing players:
 - If a coach expects not to have enough players for a game, the team may borrow players from another Junior team or from a lower division. Borrowed players cannot pitch and must bat last in the batting order. **A team must have a minimum of 6 rostered players attending in order to borrow.**
 - Borrowing players is not allowed in playoff / championship games.
- All players present at the start of a game should be listed in the batting order. Late arrivals should be added to the bottom of the order no matter what place in the order is up at the time of their arrival.
- Each team can position 9 players in the field (6 infielders, 3 outfielders).
- All players must play at least 3 defensive innings in the field.
- Free defensive substitutions are allowed.

Gameplay

- Games will be 6 innings or 2 hours, whichever comes first. An inning may not begin less than 15 minutes before the next scheduled game time or before the time limit.

- Play may be halted because of darkness or inclement weather at the umpire's discretion. If an inning is not complete at the time when play is suspended, the game will revert to the previous complete inning.
- There is a run limit of 5 per inning except for the final (6th) inning.
- Mercy rule: if a team is ahead by 15 runs or more after both teams have batted 4 times, the game will end.
- Time outs may only be requested in the infield and cannot be used as a means of stopping runners in motion. Players should always attempt to complete a play in progress before requesting time out. When time out is awarded, the umpire will determine how far runners may advance.
- A ball thrown into dead ball territory from the infield will result in all runners being awarded one additional base; a ball thrown into dead ball territory from the outfield will result in all runners being awarded two additional bases.
- **Batters may not advance to first on a dropped third strike.**
- The infield fly rule is in effect.

Pitching

- No player will be allowed to pitch without wearing a fielding/safety mask.
- Pitchers may use either a windmill or modified pitching style.
- A pitcher who is replaced may return to pitch later in the game one time. After being replaced a second time, the pitcher can no longer pitch in the game.
- The pitcher must start her windup with both feet on the pitching rubber and should push off the pitching rubber with the pivot foot while releasing the ball. Run-up deliveries are not allowed.
- At the umpire's discretion, pitchers who are unable to reach home plate consistently during the early part of the season may begin their windup at 38 feet. Pitchers will not be allowed to move up if doing so presents a safety risk. By the mid-point in the season (game 6), all pitchers must pitch from the standard distance.
- There are no pitch limits per game/week for softball.
- Coaches are allowed 1 mound visit per inning; any subsequent visit must be to remove the pitcher.

Batting

- Bunting is allowed.
- Throwing the bat is prohibited. A first offense will result in a warning; the batter will be called out for any subsequent offenses.

Base Running

- Base runners may lead and/or steal after the pitch is released. If a pickoff attempt is made following the pitch and the runner returns to her base, she must be tagged out; it is not a force play.
- Runners may not steal home or advance from third on passed balls.
- Runners may not attempt to barrel over the catcher or any other fielder. Failure to slide or give will result in a called out and may result in ejection.

- **Coaches may not assist or touch baserunners in any way, including holding them to stop them from advancing. Violations of this rule will result in the runner being called out.**

Sportsmanship

- Players should take a moment after the conclusion of the game to acknowledge the other team, either with a traditional handshake line, fist bumps, or waves, as player safety protocols dictate.

Ground Rules

- Smoking is prohibited on the field and in the spectator area.
- Pets are prohibited from ICYP grounds.
- Parents are not allowed in the dugout or on the field of play unless they are serving as base coaches. Base coaches should return to the spectator area following a team's batting half of each inning.
- Arguing with umpires, coaches, or other players will not be tolerated. The umpire may eject any individual whose behavior is considered abusive. Failure to leave the field promptly following ejection may result in forfeit by the associated team.

For safety reasons, players and spectators should walk around the perimeter of the field when arriving/departing and should remain alert for batted and thrown balls on adjacent fields.

Updated 1/18/23