USA Softball 2026 Rule Changes

USA SOFTBALL
Texas

USA Softball 2026 Rule Changes

All changes are effective

January 1, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

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Rule 3, Section 1B Note:

B. The knob shall have a diameter of at least 1.6 inches with no sharp edges. The knob will be permanently attached to the bat and may be covered with grip tape. The use of an internal or external bat sensor is allowed provided that the sensor is properly attached.

Comments: Clarifies that bat sensors are allowed during play.

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Rule 4, Section 8B:

B) A participant may be ejected at any point from the time the umpire crew enters and until they leave the field of play. An ejected participant must leave the grounds and have no contact with the umpires or participants in the game. The ejected participant is restricted from having contact with the team and is suspended for one additional game. The ejected participant is not permitted to sit in the stands, dugout or general locality of the next game. The ejected participant may appeal the one game suspension to the Championship Protest Committee.

Comments: Clarifies that umpires have authority to eject a participant before, during or after the game.

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Rule 5, Section 9A [3]:

3) Slow Pitch:

A) Slow Pitch (except Men's Class A, B, Women's Open and Seniors)
20 after three innings, 15 after four innings or 10 after five innings.

B) Men's Class A, B, Women's Open and Seniors:
20 after four innings and 15 after five innings

Comments: Changes the Women's Open run ahead rules to 20 after four innings and 15 after 5 innings.

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Rule 5, Section 10A:

A) In National Championship Finals (One True Nationals) pool and elimination play, the time limit will be one hour and forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

Exception: The Championship and “IF” games will have no time limit.

Comments: Creates a time limit for One True Nationals games.

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Rule 5, Section 10B:

B) In Junior Olympic Fast Pitch (Territorial Championships) Class A and Class B 10-under, 12-under, 14-under, 16-under, 18-under pool and elimination play, the time limit is one hour and thirty minutes and/or one hour forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

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Exception: The Championship and “IF” games will be one hour and forty minutes.

Note: Game times must be determined prior to the event.

Comments: Allows flexibility for pool play time limit to be one hour thirty minutes or one hour forty minutes. Bracket play time limit can either be one hour thirty minutes or one hour forty minutes. The precise time limits will be determined prior to the Championship.

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Rule 6C, Section 1B:

B) (Men's, Women's and Coed Class C, D and E/REC) The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to 6 feet behind the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

Comments:

Clarifies that one or both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

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Rule 8, Section 9A [2]:

C) Any eligible player may be a courtesy runner once per inning for any other player other than the pitcher. This player or any other eligible player may also courtesy run for the pitcher providing the pitcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely.

Comments:

Clarifies that the pitcher must bat for themselves and reach base safely to be eligible for a courtesy runner.

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