

United Girls Softball Association
PLAYING RULES AND REQUIREMENTS
Published July 2025

Change Log

| Version | Change Summary | Date | Change Made By |
|---------|---|-----------|----------------|
| 1.3 | Added Change Log. Added hit by pitch rule (VI.G.6). | 4/18/2025 | Mike Davis |
| 1.4 | Updated Accepted Player Requirements (IV.G.2.) Cleaned up formatting | 7/28/2025 | Mike Davis |

I. Rules

- A. All UGSA playing rules and requirements are set forth below.
- B. Any rules not covered by this document will be governed by the USA Softball Rule Book in effect at the time.
- C. Rule disputes shall be governed by the UGSA Board and rules may be changed at any time within a season if it is deemed in the best interest of the athletes.

II. Conduct

- A. All managers and coaches are responsible for their own conduct as well as that of their players, parents and fans. UGSA will provide a Code of Conduct guideline for all coaches, players, parents and fans. A team will be penalized for behavior and actions by its coaches, players, parents and fans that are not consistent with the UGSA Code of Conduct. Umpires have the right to take whatever action is necessary to uphold the integrity of the game and league. UGSA will review improper conduct and impose penalties and/or sanctions as needed.
- B. Any ejections (player, coach or parent) shall result in an automatic one game suspension (minimum) to be served immediately.
- C. An offensive player may not collide with a defensive player who has the ball in her possession or is waiting to make a play (e.g. catch, tag, throw, or force out). Any offensive player who, in the judgment of the umpire, collides with a defensive player waiting to make a play will be called out. Any offensive player that maliciously and intentionally runs into a defensive player waiting to make a play will be ejected from the game and will be subject to the procedures of the UGSA by laws.

III. Playing Requirements

- A. Bases shall be 60' apart, with the pitching rubber at 35' (8U and 10U), 40' (12U) and 43' (15U and up).
- B. All games shall be umpired by one home plate umpire. The exception will be championship final games where two or more umpires will officiate.
- C. All players must have a common uniform, including a shirt with numbers. No player can wear a school uniform or any other uniform that does not match that of her UGSA team.
- D. Teams must bat all players present that are not injured.
 - 1. Injured players will not be allowed to enter the game at any point if they are not in the lineup to start.

E. 12U Freedom, 8U,10U Freedom, and 10U Liberty teams have option to use a fourth outfielder (Left Center/Right Center). If a team starts with 10 players, it must end with 10 players (barring injuries). The 10th player cannot be an infielder.

F. Minimum Players

1. A minimum of 8 players are needed to play an official game.
2. A forfeit will occur when there are 7 or less players.
 - a) EXCEPTION: Teams may play a game with 7 players (not less) if both teams agree at the ground rule meeting.
3. A late arriving player cannot be the 8th player.
4. A team may not finish a game with less than 8 players.
5. If a team plays with 7 or 8 players, a guest outfielder(s) will be used (last batted out(s) by opposition) every inning.

G. Substitute Players

1. If a player is injured or falls ill during a game, that player can be replaced by any rostered player not in the starting lineup.
2. If no additional rostered players are available, that player's batting position is skipped in the lineup and will not be ruled automatically out.

H. Players leaving early or arriving late

1. Any player scheduled to arrive late must be identified and announced no later than at ground rules prior to game start. The late arriving player will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup and skipped if they have not arrived when their turn comes up the first time around.
2. A late arriving player not identified at ground rules will result in the disqualification of that player and an out will be recorded for each time that player is scheduled to bat during the game.
3. Any player that must leave early (or is injured/ill) will be removed from the lineup without penalty and their place in the batting order skipped.

I. Game Balls

1. Each game will be played with a new ball and another ball in good condition supplied by the home team.

2. A 12" fluorescent ball with a .47 C.O.R rating will be used in 12U, 15U, and HS divisions.

3. An 11" fluorescent ball with a .47 C.O.R will be used in the 8U and 10U divisions.

J. Legal Bats.

1. All bats must have the USA or ASA stamp to be legal. USSSA stamped bats are not legal. Dual stamped bats (USA/ASA and USSSA) will be legal.

2. Any bats that have been altered in any way will be illegal and any team found to be using an altered bat will be subject to expulsion from the League.

K. Protective Gear

1. All protective gear must be NOCSAE stamped and approved.

2. Batting Helmets must include a full cage style face mask

a) Any player removing her batting helmet while on base or in the field of play will be called out. Helmets must stay on until the player enters the dugout.

3. All non-catcher fielders must wear face masks in 8U & 10U levels. Face masks are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED at older age groups.

4. Metal cleats are not allowed in 8U, 10U, & 12U divisions. Metal cleats are permitted in the 15U and 18U/HS divisions.

5. Catchers must wear helmets, shin guards, and chest protector.

a) A catcher's helmet must have throat guard or be a hockey style helmet with extended throat protection.

L. All batting lineups must be recorded in each team's record books indicating the player's first name, last name, and jersey number. **Nicknames are NOT acceptable.**

M. Lineup cards must be filled out for the umpire and opposing team prior to game start.

N. Team interaction with umpire.

1. Only the **manager or acting manager** (designated at ground rules) is permitted to question the umpire on any rule interpretation or judgment call.

2. Manager or acting manager is responsible for the behavior of their assistants, players, parents, and fans.

3. Umpire calls involving balls, strikes, fair/foul balls, safe/out, etc. are not to be questioned whatsoever.
 4. Excessive questioning will result in automatic ejection at umpire's discretion of any manager, player, or fan in attendance at the game.
 - a) Ejections resulting from excessive questioning of balls/strikes as stated above will not be an appealable offense and sanctions will stand as stated on code of conduct.
 5. Any protest to the umpire must be made before the next pitched ball.
- O. All games are subject to video recording and the league is authorized to use/release said recordings for whatever purposes the league deems appropriate.

IV. Legal Players/Teams

- A. All Leagues must be covered under a group accident insurance policy and a general liability insurance program to be eligible.
- B. A player's league age is determined by their age on December 31 of the previous year
 1. For example, for the 2025 Season (Fall 2024 & Spring 2025) the player's age on December 31, 2024, determines the age division a player is eligible to participate in.
 2. Effective for the 2026 season (Fall 2025 forward), a player's league age will be determined via rules in place at USA Softball and Section IV, B, can be removed.
- C. Teams enrolled in the UGSA must submit valid birth certificates for all rostered players by the first game of the playing season or the morning of a tournament.
- D. Each team shall maintain an official scorebook for each game. This book is subject to review by the UGSA in the event of a dispute.
 1. GameChanger is considered a legal scorebook.
- E. All protests must be filed within 24 hours of the game in question and must be done so in writing to the Board of the UGSA.
- F. All teams must submit a player roster before the season starts on forms supplied by UGSA.
- G. Legal Players
 1. Hometown Players

- a) All teams must have a roster of players living within the team's **Hometown Drawing District**.
- b) The Hometown Drawing District can also include players enrolled at a public or private school within that drawing district. If a public school, that district must also serve that town's children.
- c) Teams or organizations that overlap district boundaries **must** apply to the board for approval of players residing in intersecting districts.
- d) All teams must represent a **Hometown Drawing District**, as defined by the UGSA upon the team's inaugural season. Teams may apply for a redistricting of their "hometown" once every three years if necessary. In the event that two teams consider the same district as their own, the team with the longest continuously running charter in that district shall be considered the hometown drawing district team in the event of a dispute. This does not apply to tournament play.

2. Accepted Players

- a) Accepted Players shall be defined as a player not considered part of a team's hometown drawing district even if that player has been on a team outside her hometown drawing district in the past.
 - (1) 8U - 4 Accepted Players
 - (2) 10UF - 1 Accepted Player
 - (3) 10UL - 4 Accepted Players
 - (4) 12UF - 3 Accepted Players
 - (5) 12UL - 4 Accepted Players
 - (6) 15U <=50% of roster can be Accepted Players
- b) An Accepted Player must be clearly identified on the team roster form.

3. Tournament Players

- a) Tournament player rankings will be determined by the highest ranking of that player on USSSA's or USA Softball's websites.
- b) Any player that is an A level tournament player is not permitted on any roster in 8U, 10U, 12U, or 15U.
- c) B level tournament players cannot be on the roster of any Freedom division team.
- d) HS Division Player Eligibility - An "A" level player may play for her hometown team and will not count as an accepted player. "A" level players may not play on any other roster or for any other town regardless of where she attends school.

H. Player Eligibility.

1. A player enrolled on a Liberty team may not play on another Liberty or a Freedom team within the same age division.
2. However, a Freedom player may **guest** play on a Liberty team provided she is also listed on that roster prior to season commencement. Upon playing in the fifth (5th) game that player will be permanently rostered on the Liberty team and may not play back on the Freedom team. This must be brought to your commissioner's attention prior to the games in which she is to play.
3. A player may play on only one team within the same age division. However, a player may guest play on a Freedom or Liberty team in a higher age division for four (4) games providing she is on the roster at the start of the season. Upon the start of the (5th) game that player will be permanently rostered on that team in the higher age division and is not permitted to play on lower age division. This must be brought to your commissioner's attention prior to the start of the games the player is playing.
4. A team roster may have no more than 16 players including substitute players for that season. Any additions to your roster after it has been submitted to UGSA must be board approved.
5. A final roster date will be before your 4th game your roster will be locked. Once the final roster date is reached the team roster cannot be changed or amended.

I. Any team participating in a game with a player not considered legal within UGSA bylaws will be subject to manager, coach, and/or team ejection from the UGSA. Players may not play in multiple programs.

J. **ALL PLAYERS** in every division must play at least 50% of regular season games to be eligible for playoffs.

V. Duration of Game

A. Game Start

1. Scheduled Game Time will be noted on league schedule on ugsasoftball.com
2. Actual Game Start Time will be announced by the umpire at the beginning of the game.
 - a) Rosters must be exchanged along with lineup cards to umpire no later than 10 minutes before scheduled game start.

3. A forfeit will be recorded if a team with a minimum of 8 players does not arrive within 30 minutes after a Scheduled Game Time.

4. Provided there are at least 8 players per team, umpire, and coach/adult the game will start no later than 30 minutes after its scheduled start time.

a) If the field is not ready for play 31 minutes after scheduled game start time the game can be rescheduled or played if both parties agree.

b) In the event a scheduled umpire is 31 minutes late from game start time, the game can be rescheduled or if both managers agree a substitute umpire may be inserted.

B. Duration of Game

1. **Time Limit.** No new inning may commence after 105 minutes (1 hr 45 min) has elapsed following Actual Game Start Time. A new inning commences when the third out is called at the bottom half of any inning.

a) The umpire can add up to 15 additional minutes to any time limit for unusual delays (e.g. rain, lightning, injury, etc.).

b) Games played under lights must end no later than 10:50 pm.

c) Any game that ends due to time limit will be considered an official game with the score recorded as of the last full inning completed, no matter how many innings have been played.

2. Games stopped due to weather that have gone for at least 1 complete inning, but less than 5 innings (4½ innings if home team is winning) will be considered suspended at the point of stoppage, clock paused, and will resume play from the stoppage point (the Resumed Game) until completed on a rescheduled date.

a) **Lightning strike rule:** Visual lightning strike will delay game for 30 minutes. Umpire will stop play & the clock and relay procedures for clearing the field of play. Each lightning strike will restart the clock at 30 minutes until umpire gives all clear. This is a NJ state rule and must be followed.

b) Resumed Games will be constrained to the above time limits.

c) Lineups in Resumed Games will remain the same as in the suspended game to the extent possible. Otherwise, substitutions for Resumed Games are applied in the order below:

(1) Players not in the suspended game lineup can be substituted for any player not at the resumed game.

(2) Players not at the resumed game that player's batting position is skipped in the lineup and will not be ruled an automatic out.

3. Regular Season Games that do not exceed any of the above limits will have a duration of 7 innings in the 12U, 15U and High School divisions & a duration of 6 innings in 8U & 10U.

a) If time permits, tie games may continue for a maximum of 2 innings until a winner is declared. In the event time has still not elapsed after 2 extra innings have been completed the next and subsequent innings will be played under International Tie-Breaker rules until a winner is declared. Regular season games can end in a tie although all post-season/elimination games will be played until a winner is declared.

C. Managers must encourage their players to move quickly on and off the field between innings so as not to delay the game. Pitchers will be permitted 5 warm-up pitches between innings.

D. All post-season games will be played to completion of innings with no time limit limitation. Tie- breaker rules will also apply.

VI. Playing Rules and Adjustments

A. Mercy Rule:

1. 10U and up. A team ahead by 10 or more runs after the 5th inning (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) will be declared winner.

2. 8U: Mercy will be 12 runs after 4 (3.5) innings.

B. Inning Run Limits:

1. 10U Liberty, 12U and up. There is a limit of 5 runs per inning or 3 outs whichever comes first.

2. 10U Freedom will play to a limit of 4 runs per inning or 3 outs, whichever comes first.

3. 8U will play to a limit of 3 runs per innings or 3 outs, whichever comes first.

4. Once 70 minutes have elapsed the home team will alert the umpire, and the umpire will declare all remaining innings to be unlimited runs. *For the sake of clarity, there can be multiple unlimited run innings if time limits permit.*

C. Courtesy Runners.

1. A courtesy runner with two outs in an inning (or one run remaining in a run limit inning) is optional for a pitcher on base and mandatory for a catcher on base. The courtesy runner shall be determined as the player who made the last completed at bat.

D. 10U Liberty Adjustments.

1. The Dropped Third Strike rule shall not apply.
2. The Infield Fly Rule shall not apply.
3. Continuous Walks shall not apply.

E. 10U Freedom Adjustments.

1. The Dropped Third Strike rule shall not apply.
2. The Infield Fly Rule shall not apply.
3. Continuous Walks shall not apply.
4. INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
5. Stolen Bases.
 - a) Runners may attempt to steal second and third bases at will.
 - b) Runners may only advance one base per steal attempt.
 - (1) This allows catchers to attempt a throw without risk of error.
 - c) Only one runner may successfully steal home per half inning.
 - d) Should any runner attempt to steal a base outside of these rules, they do so at their own risk. If the runner is put out by the defense, the out stands. If the runner successfully advances, the umpire will place the runner(s) back to their original base.
6. Modified Coach Pitch.
 - a) If the pitch count gets to 4 balls on a batter a coach from the batter's team may deliver up to 4 additional pitches. There are no walks in 10U Freedom.
 - (1) If there are Zero strikes, the coach may throw up to three pitches.
 - (2) If there is One strike, the coach may throw up to two pitches.
 - (3) If there are Two strikes, the coach may throw up to one pitches.
 - (4) The umpire, at their sole discretion, allow an additional pitch in case of a coach pitch that cannot physically be hit by the batter. There will be no challenges to whether or not the umpire invokes an additional pitch.

(5) If the batter fouls off the last pitch the batter can receive another pitch. Batter can continue batting if she continues to foul off pitches.

(6) There are no walks in 10U Freedom.

b) Hit by pitch rules shall not apply during coach pitch. Batters legally hit by a pitched ball will be ruled dead and the pitch will not count.

c) Coach pitcher location- The coach pitcher must release the ball from the pitching rubber and must not purposely interfere with game play. There is no coaching from the field of play. If coach pitcher is hit by batted ball, the play is ruled dead, and the umpire will call for a re-pitch.

d) Player Pitcher must remain in the pitchers' circle on either side of the coach or behind the coach in order to field any hit balls.

e) If the coach touches a batted ball while pitching the ball will be ruled dead. All runners will return to their previous bases and the batter will receive another pitch.

f) Coaches must not encourage players to wait until the coach takes over to pitch before swinging at pitches.

g) No stealing or bunting is allowed while a coach is pitching.

h) Runners must remain on base until the pitch crosses home plate.

F. 8U Adjustments

1. The Dropped Third Strike rule shall not apply.

2. The Infield Fly Rule shall not apply.

3. Continuous Walks shall not apply.

4. Runners may advance up to one base on an infield overthrow.

5. Players shall not bunt or steal.

6. Play shall be ruled over once any defensive player has the ball securely in the pitcher's circle. Any runners more than halfway to the next base may finish advancing to that base. Runners not forced to advance and less than halfway must return to the previous base.

7. Coach Pitch.

a) Games will be 100% Coach Pitched.

- b) Each batter will be given a maximum of 5 pitches to try to hit the ball into play. No balls or strikes will be called. If the ball has not been hit into play after 5 pitches the batter is out. If the batter fouls the 5th pitch, they will receive another pitch & will continue if they continue to foul the pitch. Three swinging strikes and you are out.
 - c) Hit by pitch rules shall not apply during coach pitch. Batters legally hit by a pitched ball will be ruled dead and the pitch will not count.
 - d) The catcher must be in a true catcher's position behind home plate before the pitcher pitches the ball.
 - e) Coach pitcher location- The coach pitcher must release the ball from the pitching rubber and must not purposely interfere with game play. There is no coaching from the field of play. If coach pitcher is hit by batted ball, the play is ruled dead, and the umpire will call for a re-pitch.
- 8. Batters/Runners may attempt to get as many bases as possible on hits to the outfield.
 - 9. A player can advance on an overthrow. However, a player is liable to be put out while attempting to take an extra base unless the ball has been ruled out of play or the play has been considered dead by the umpire. If the ball has been ruled out of play a player may only advance 1 base.
 - 10. The catcher must be in a true catcher's position behind home plate before the pitcher pitches the ball.
 - 11. No other coaches other than the coach who is pitching will be allowed on the field in fair territory. No defensive coaches will be allowed on the playing field. (One exception is coach standing behind catcher to expedite game)
 - 12. Catcher will return the ball to pitcher; Catcher must wear full gear. Catchers must start in a true catcher's position. A coach may stand behind home plate to expedite getting the ball to the pitcher. Coach may not assist on a ball in play.
 - 13. There is no runner advancement on any overthrow made by an infielder to the outfield.
 - 14. An outfielder must start on the grass and may not make a play at any bag.
 - 15. On an overthrow to first or third- any ball that lands in the outfield is considered no advancement. Any ball that goes out of play will be considered one base advancement for any baserunner. Any ball that remains in the infield (fair or foul) is considered a live ball.

G. All Division Adjustments

1. A team will be permitted 3 defensive conferences per seven innings. On the 3rd conference the pitcher must be removed and replaced for the remainder of the game. There is one additional defensive conference permitted for each extra inning played. Changing pitchers is not considered a defensive conference.
2. A team will be permitted only one offensive conference per inning.
3. Fake tags (in order to deceive the runner) are not permitted and are considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Player and manager will be subject to ejection from the game.
4. Any player or manager that intentionally throws a bat or any other equipment is subject to ejection. First offense-team warning, thereafter players will be called out by umpire.
5. Slide or Veer is in effect during all plays at any base. This must be brought up at ground rules and will serve as your first warning, the second can result in player ejection. Players are expected to be knowledgeable and versed on how to properly slide or veer.
6. A pitcher can hit no more than 3 batters in one inning or a maximum of 5 batters for the entire game. Pitcher must be immediately replaced after hitting the 4th batter in an inning or 6th batter during the game.

VII. Game rescheduling.

- A. Rescheduling must be done within guidelines established by UGSA. Managers must contact the opposing team within 48 hours to reschedule.
- B. All game changes must be presented to and approved by the division commissioner. Umpire cancellations and game rescheduling will be the responsibility of the team manager. All contacts will be forwarded to the umpire and chief of UGSA.
- C. Season start and ending dates will be announced at the managers meetings. For spring seasons, ALL games must be completed by the deadline in order to be seeded properly.
- D. Any game cancellation due to weather related conditions must have a new makeup date given to the UGSA no later than 48hrs after cancellation was made. League Coordinator must be emailed only after the final game date/time has been established. If an umpire arrives at a game that was not canceled the team responsible for canceling will pay the total umpire fee. Games not played by the dates given will be forfeited.
- E. Once a game schedule has been entered into the system a team will have 48 hours to double check and make sure all game days, times, locations are correct. Following this the schedule will be considered FINAL. A \$25 fee will be charged for any changes made after the final schedule is established. Any and all changes must be sent to both the league coordinator and the current President.

F. ALL fines must be paid prior to playoffs, if fines aren't paid, the team will not be seeded, and a forfeit will be awarded. For fall, the fines that occur would have to be paid before the next season in which you are applying to play.

G. Games changes must be in the following format, or they will not be recorded;

H. Age division, home team/away team, original date/time/location and change(s) to be made

I. Game day cancellations. The head coach MUST contact the league coordinator by text, call or email as well as sending email to appropriate addresses with the proper information. Failure to do so will result in the team being responsible for payment to the umpire that shows up for the game.

VIII. Score Reporting

A. Scores must be submitted via the SportsEngine App by the home team.

B. If a score isn't received, then a 1-1 tie will be entered. If a team wants this changed to the actual score a \$25 fee will be charged. The score must be reported properly (i.e. divisions, teams, time) or it will not be recorded.

C. During fall season reporting of game scores is not required because there are no playoffs.

IX. Standings-

A. Standings will be maintained on www.ugsasoftball.com.

B. Discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the league coordinator as soon as possible.

C. Tiebreakers are as follows:

1. Win percentage
2. Head-to-head records (if two teams)
3. Run differential
4. Coin Flip