



2024 Minors Division Rules

THE PLAYING FIELD

Field: The playing field shall be as prescribed in the ASA Official Rules. If an end of outfield demarcation line is utilized (as opposed to an open, unrestricted field), the distance to that line shall be set at 150 feet. The pitching distance in the 10U division shall be 35 feet. Temporary pitching rubbers are provided on field where the permanent rubber is at a different distance.

Set-up: Home team shall be responsible for setting up the field, including installing bases before the start of the game and for returning bases to storage when the game has ended.

EQUIPMENT

Uniforms: Uniforms must be worn by each player on a team and must be alike in color. An exception is when a player from another division is filling out the roster for another team and none of that team's uniforms are available. In this instance, the player shall wear the uniform from her own team even though it may be different in color and style.

Sweatshirts or Jackets on Cold Days: Sweatshirts or jackets with or without numbers may be worn in the field and up at bat on cold days and nights. If numbers are not visible, the player's number on her jersey must be shown to the umpire and opposing team, when requested. Colors of sweatshirts and jackets need not match.

Jewelry and Medical Alert: Jewelry shall not be worn during an official game. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not jewelry and may be worn but must be taped to the body in such fashion that the medical alert information is visible.

Replacement Gloves and Mitts: If during play, a glove or mitt breaks or is otherwise determined to be unusable by the umpire, the player may immediately and without delay obtain a legal replacement glove or mitt and is entitled to three warm-up catches prior to restarting the game. To avoid any conflict with the USA Softball excessive warm-up rule, a pitcher participating in this warm-up shall throw the ball overhand.

Batting Helmet Masks: All batting helmets shall be outfitted with a securely fastened NOCSAE facemask. Batting helmets must be worn at all times when on the field of play and during batting warm-ups.

Balls: The Minors official softball is the 11 inch Dudley official USA Softball ball.

Face Masks for Fielders: **Pitchers are required to wear face masks.** The use of face masks by infielders is recommended and encouraged, but is not mandatory.

FEMALE ADULT CHAPERONE

In accordance with USA Softball requirements, a female adult must be present at all team activities, including games, practices and other team events. This person can be a coach, assistant coach, manager or team parent volunteer.

PLAYERS, COACHES, SUBSTITUTES

Players: A player is defined as a girl of the proper age for her division of play. A team must have the minimum number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. ***Though the 10U division is locally allowed to play with ten players, the minimum number of players is eight. A game may begin or finish with eight players, but no fewer.***

Players Arriving Late: If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, that player shall be inserted in the vacant position in the batting order. If a player arrives prior to the start of the third inning, she is eligible to play and shall be inserted as the last batter in the line-up. Players arriving after the start of the third inning are not eligible to play.

Players Leaving Early: Any player leaving a game prior to its completion will have her turn at bat counted as an out. ***Exceptions*** to this rule are players leaving because of (1) illness, (2) injury, (3) emergency, and (4) notification by one coach to the other ***prior to the start of the game*** that a particular player or players will be leaving the game prior to its completion. After the game has started, a team shall not be entitled to exception (4) above. If a player leaves the game for reasons other than those provided in the exceptions above, the batter's position in the batting order will be taken as an out when the player is due to bat, unless agreed otherwise between coaches.

Players from a Lower Division Filling Out a Roster: When a team is short of players for a particular game, players may be brought up from a lower division of the league to fill out the roster up to 10 players. The player(s) shall be placed last in the batting order (rotation). Replacement players may play any position on the field other than pitcher or catcher. A regular rostered player who is not expected to start a game but arrives prior to the third inning may be inserted in the last position of the batting order. The player who was brought up to fill out the roster shall play at least six (6) outs on defense (i.e., the minimum playing time required in a game).

Defensive Substitutes: Defensive substitutions may be made at the coach's discretion to meet the minimum participation requirements.

Courtesy Runner Substitutes: RCGSL permits the use of courtesy runners for a pitcher or catcher or a player who reaches base and becomes injured. ***The courtesy runner must be the player in the batting order who made the most recent out made by the batting team.*** For example, if a courtesy runner is used for a leadoff hitter, the courtesy runner would be the player who made the final out for the batting team in their previous offensive half-inning.

Injured Players: An injured player shall not be allowed to play in a game. Injuries that occur during practice or game, must be reported to the RCGSL board. Email at treasurer@rcgsl.org. Please include: Player name, Player DOB, Date of Injury, Type of injury, Treatment given, and whether Parents were notified. This information may be emailed by the Head Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Manager.

THE GAME

Starting Times: Consult schedule for weekend games. The umpire will announce the official starting time of the game to the Official Scorekeeper at the start of each game. The Official Scorekeeper shall record the start time in the scorebook.

Starting Line-ups: Starting line-ups shall be presented to the Official Scorekeeper and/or opposing manager at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game and must include the names and uniform numbers of the players present.

Game Balls: Home team shall provide two game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game.

Home Team/First Base Dugout: Home team will normally occupy the first base dugout. An ***exception*** is that in the event of a double header, teams will not change dugouts, regardless of whether they are the home or visiting team for the second game.

Warm-ups Prior to Game: Batting practice, pitching practice, and infield practice are not allowed in fair territory of the infield, prior to the start of the game. Warm-ups are confined to foul territory of the infield and the grass outfield in fair or foul territory.

Game Length: Games shall be six (6) innings or one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes in length, whichever limit is reached first. ***A new inning starts when the final out is recorded in the prior inning, and a new inning shall begin if any amount of time is left on the official game clock.*** That new inning shall be played to its conclusion whether or not time expires during the playing of that new inning.

Official Games: A game is "official" when the maximum number of innings are reached OR time expires (regardless of the number of innings completed), whichever occurs first. A game is "official" if the game is stopped while time remains on the official game clock and at least four (4) full innings have been completed.

Stopping or Ending a Game Early (Rain, Darkness, and Other Reasons): In the event a game ends due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league prior to the game becoming an official game (see rule above) (other than for time expiring in accordance with Rule "Game Length" above), the game shall be rescheduled and

resumed as a completion of a suspended game at the next mutually convenient opportunity for the teams involved. *The division coordinator and scheduler will schedule a date for the resumption and completion of the game.*

Tie Games and Tie-Breaker Rule: If the score of a regular season game is tied when time expires or after six (6) innings, the game will end in a tie. Championship tournament games that are tied at the end of regulation time or innings shall be played to conclusion under USA Softball tiebreaker rules.

Team Play: The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team shall be ten (10); the minimum number of players shall be eight (8). (If one team can field only eight (8) players, the opposing team may still field ten (10). Any team with fewer than eight (8) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.

Minimum Play: Each player shall participate on the field on defense a minimum of two (2) innings (6 defensive outs). Failure of any team to observe this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action against the coach and forfeiture of the game. Managers are encouraged to allow players to play longer than the minimum during the season so that the girls will learn through experience to play better softball. Each player must play in an infield position at least one inning per game. The requirement to have each player play one defensive inning in the infield does not apply during the championship playoff tournament.

Positioning of Players: Prior to the release of a pitch, teams shall have their outfielders positioned:

1. At least ten (10) feet to the outfield side of first base, second base, and third base or ten (10) feet from any point along an imaginary line extending between the bases;
2. Such that no more than two (2) outfielders are located on either side of dead center of the field. (Dead center is an imaginary line extending from home plate through second base and into the outfield to the end of the playing field.)
3. A team fielding ten (10) players shall have four (4) outfielders; a team fielding nine (9) players shall have three (3) outfielders; and a team fielding eight (8) players shall have two (2) outfielders.

Ten-Run Rule: If after four complete (4) innings one team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire. The 10-run rule applies to all regular season and championship playoff games, including the championship game.

Runs Per Inning Rule:

***Continuation:** Run continuation will be in effect. Example: 3 runs have already scored and bases are loaded, the batter hits a home-run...all runs count and the team is awarded 7 runs for that inning.

***Trailing team:** The team that is trailing in the score at any point in the game can score enough runs to take a one (1) -run lead even if that would result in a team scoring more than 4 runs in an inning. (*Example – visiting team is trailing 7-0 when they come to bat in the top of the 3rd inning – they can score 8 runs – enough to take a one run lead*)

There will be a maximum of four (4) runs scored by either team in any inning, with the following exceptions –

PITCHING REGULATIONS

Pitching Outs and Game Week: A player may pitch no more than *fifteen (15) outs per game week when there is only one game, or no more than 24 outs per week in a game week with multiple games.* A *game week* begins on Monday and runs through the following Sunday. *Each team must use a second pitcher for at least one complete inning of each game (regardless of whether the team's primary pitcher has reached her 15 or 24 out limit). A pitcher may only re-enter once per game.* A complete inning shall consist of an inning in which three outs are recorded or an inning which ends before three outs are recorded due to the run limit being reached. A pitcher who pitches a complete inning which is terminated before three outs are recorded due to the offensive team reaching the run limit will be charged with three outs against her pitch count for the week. Pitcher's outs for rescheduled and resumed games shall be based on and revert back to the outs recorded in the game week for the games being rescheduled and resumed. The 15-out limit and the requirement to use a second pitcher for one complete inning of each game will not apply to the championship playoff tournament.

Changing Pitchers: An individual player may only be brought into the pitcher's position twice throughout a game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to a fielding position or from the bench to a pitching position in order to put a specific pitcher against a specific batter or batters throughout the entirety of the game. This may be considered contrary to fair play and/or delay of the game. Coaches guilty of this practice may be subject to disciplinary action.

Walks: Walks will be permitted and a batter will receive a base on balls once four balls are recorded. The bases-loaded walk/coach pitch rule has been eliminated.

BATTING

Rotation Batting Order: All players who are in attendance shall be listed in the lineup and take their turn batting. Some players will be batting even though they are not playing defense. Since all players in attendance are listed in the line-up, the batting order will remain the same throughout the entire game.

RULE 8 – BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

Dropped Third Strike: *Dropped Third Strike rule is in effect.* Per USA Softball rules, the dropped third strike rule applies in any situation with two outs and, if there are less than two outs, only in situations in which first base is not occupied. First base is considered occupied if a runner was on the base when the pitcher began her delivery (as required by ASA rules) regardless of whether the runner attempts to steal after the pitcher releases the ball.

Infield Fly Rule: *Infield Fly Rule is in effect.*

Base Runners Advancing and Scoring: Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:

1. When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
2. By being played upon by the defense.
3. When forced to advance by base-on-balls or being hit by a pitch.
4. When stealing a base (including home), as described below.
5. When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.

Base Stealing: Stealing of second base, third base and home (and advancing on a passed ball, wild pitch or dropped third strike) is permitted in accordance with ASA rules (runner may not leave the base until pitcher has released the ball).

PROTESTS

There shall be no protests.

UMPIRES

Umpires for Games: If no official USA Softball or other league designated umpires are available at game time, each team will be asked to provide one volunteer to umpire the game. If one team cannot provide a volunteer, the other team may provide two or the game may proceed with just one volunteer. If one or more official umpires arrives after the game has started, the umpire(s) will take control of the game in progress (games will not start over). The Official Scorekeeper shall record the time and point in the game that the change in umpiring took place.

SCORING (also known as scorekeeping)

Official Scorekeeper or Scorer: The home team's scorekeeper shall be Official Scorekeeper/Scorer for each game. If a competent scorer is not available to the home team, the coaches may by mutual agreement appoint someone not from the home team to act as Official Scorekeeper. If agreement cannot be reached, the umpire shall designate the Official Scorekeeper/Scorer.

Records and Score Reporting: The official scorekeeper or scorer shall keep records of each game based on the rules/guidelines of ASA Rule 11. The official scorer must record all pitching changes. Other defensive substitutions do not need to be recorded. ***As soon as possible following the completion of the game, the game score and the number of innings pitched/outs recorded by each pitcher must be reported by the official scorer to scores@rcgsl.org.***

Disqualified Players:

1. A disqualified player is one who is removed from playing in a game as a penalty for a specific rule violation. The violation may have been caused by the coach substituting the player improperly or some other rule violation. Effect: The violating team must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the player disqualification results in the team being reduced to eight players, the game shall continue to be played. If the disqualification results in the team being reduced to

seven players, the game will be stopped and a forfeit declared. Any disqualified player discovered participating in the game shall also be grounds for a forfeit.

2. An ejected player is a player or coach removed from a game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. If considered by the umpire to be flagrant, the player or coach will be required to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. Effect: The team with the ejected player must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the ejected player is a runner or batter, the player shall be declared out even though she may have reached base safely.

Shorthanded Play:

1. Shorthanded play is where a team starts or finishes a game with the minimum number of players (i.e., eight). Any player leaving a game prior to its completion will have her turn at bat counted as an out. Exceptions to this rule are players leaving because of (1) illness, (2) injury, (3) emergency, and (4) notification by one coach to the other prior to the start of the game that a particular player or players will be leaving the game prior to its completion.

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYOFFS

- A. A single-elimination championship playoff tournament will be held at the conclusion of the regular season. The tournament will use a traditional bracket format. Highest seeds will play lowest seeds in the first round (for example, 1 seed plays 8, 2 plays 7 and so forth). Seeding will be based on regular season won-lost record. Ties for playoff seeding will be broken as follows: (1) record in head to head competition, (2) runs allowed in head to head competition, (3) run differential in head to head competition and (4) coin flip. The higher (better) seeded team will be the home team for all playoff games, except the championship game for which home team will be determined by a pregame coin flip.
- B. All of the above rules will be in effect for the championship playoffs except as follows:
 - a. The championship game (only) will be six innings in duration with no time limit. The 10-run ahead rule will apply to the championship game.