



## 2026 SPRING SEASON

### 12U Regular Season Playing Rules & Guidelines

Fast-pitch softball skill development is the goal of the Spring Rec season. Coaches and fans are encouraged only to cheer and encourage during game play. Rules will change for the Playoff.

#### 1. HOME TEAM & DUGOUTS

The team listed first on the schedule will be the Home team and will occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> Base dugout. Teams playing a double header may remain in the same dugout.

#### 2. FIELD PREP & UMPIRE FEES

The host city and teams will be solely responsible for providing field prep and for compensating umpires according to their own internal procedures.

#### 3. BASE AND PITCHING DISTANCES

The distance between bases and the pitching plate shall comply with USA Softball requirements. Currently, the distance between bases is 60 feet and the pitching distance is set at 40 feet.

#### 4. GAME LENGTH

All games in the 12U division will be seven (7) innings or one hour and twenty minutes (1:20) no new inning; one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) drop dead, finish the batter.

#### 5. STANDINGS

There are no standings during the Regular Season.

#### 6. SCOREKEEPING

- a. Each team shall have an official team scorekeeper. The scorekeeper must enter each player's first and last names (and # if possible – NO nicknames) into the team scoring system for each game played so that player participation may be tracked.
- b. Coaches may, but are not required to, submit formal lineups to each other or with the umpire, but scorekeepers should communicate and verify rosters and lineups with the other team. Late arriving players shall be entered at the end of the lineup upon arrival.
- c. Paper scorebooks, GameChanger or any other similar application is acceptable.



- d. The Home team will be the official scorekeeper and will assist with game administration.
- e. Defensive positioning does not need to be recorded, other than for pitching limits.

## 7. EQUIPMENT

- a. All players must have the proper equipment to take the field including cleats and glove. Only appropriate baseball/softball cleats may be worn to practices or games. No tennis shoes. No metal cleats. All jerseys shall be tucked in.
- b. Catchers must wear protective equipment including helmet, mask, chest protector, and shin guards.
- c. All batters, runners, players in the on-deck circle and/or players acting as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.
- d. Helmets must include chinstrap and approved softball face guard.
- e. All bats must be approved USA Softball fastpitch bats with logo.
- f. Fielders' mask requirements will be left to each individual league for their own teams, regardless of the game location.
- g. A USA Softball approved, regulation 12" softball will be used.
- h. The Home team will provide one (1) new game ball and the Away team will provide one (1) new or game-worthy used ball to the umpire prior to each game.

## 8. PLAYER MINIMUMS

Every attempt should be made to play. In the event a team is unable to field a minimum of eight (8) players, the game may still be played with the agreement of both coaches. The opposing team is encouraged to provide additional defensive players. No outs will be recorded for vacant spots in the lineup for a team with fewer than 8 players.

## 9. RUN LIMIT

Each half-inning will be limited to 3 outs or four (4) runs; whichever occurs first. Run Limits may be revisited toward the end of the season.

## 10. RUN AHEAD RULE

None.

## 11. DEFENSIVE PLAYERS

- a. Each team shall use three (3) outfielders for a total of nine (9) defensive positions (including six (6) traditional infield positions).
- b. No player may sit on the bench more than one (1) inning in any game until all other players on their team have sat one (1) inning.



- c. Each player must play at least one (1) inning of infield by the completion of the 4th inning. If the game is less than four (4) complete innings, the player must start the next game at an infield position.

*Note: The participation rules are designed to get all players involved in infield positions if they do not create a safety hazard.*

## **12. PLAYER RE-ENTRY**

Unlimited defensive substitution is allowed (modified for pitchers and subject to the rules and guidelines above in 11-b & 11-c). Substitute players may be entered at the beginning of innings or whenever the umpire calls time out.

## **13. INFIELD FLY AND DROPPED THIRD STRIKE**

The infield fly rule and the dropped third strike rule will be in effect per USA Softball rules.

## **14. BATTING**

- a. All teams will bat round robin for players present at the start of the game.
- b. Late arriving players must be added to the bottom of the lineup. The opposing team must be notified of any additions when the player enters the game.
- c. The batting order will remain fixed throughout the game; with the exception of any late arriving players.
- d. Batters hit by a pitch will be awarded first base.
- e. Injured players or players otherwise forced to leave the game shall be reported to both the umpire and the opposing team. If a player leaves a game, there is no penalty. Any player leaving a game for any reason may not return to the same game.
- f. No out will be taken for injured players unable to take their turn at bat.

## **15. BASE RUNNING**

- a. Stealing is allowed in accordance with USA Softball rules. Home will be OPEN.
- b. Base runners may leave a base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Base runners who step off the base and/or lead off the base prior to the pitch or before the ball leaving the pitcher's hand will be called out. All other base runners will be returned to their previous base.
- c. Walks – A batter/base runner may attempt 2<sup>nd</sup> base on a walk so long as the runner does not stop or hesitate. A bases loaded walk will result in a run.
- d. Overthrows – the ball is live as long as it remains in play. Base runners may attempt to advance multiple bases.



- e. It is the responsibility of the base runner to avoid any collision with a defensive player (who is making a play on a batted ball).
- f. Obstruction – the defensive player must stay out of the way of a base runner if they are not making a play on a batted ball or receiving a thrown ball.
- g. Sliding is allowed and encouraged, particularly on close plays at home plate to avoid a collision.

## **16. PITCHING RULES**

- a. The pitching distance is 40 feet.
- b. The umpire will keep track of balls and strikes.
- c. Pitching Limits -- A pitcher may pitch a maximum of five (5) innings in a game. One pitch to a batter constitutes an inning pitched.
- d. Pitchers Substitution -- A pitcher removed from pitching by the coach may return to the game only once to pitch, subject to the pitching limit rule above. A pitcher removed during an inning may not return to pitch in that same inning.

## **17. COURTESY RUNNERS**

Courtesy runners will be allowed for the pitcher and catcher of record. The runner shall be the player making the last recorded out. In the case that no outs have been recorded in the game, the runner shall be the last batter listed in the roster.

## **18. SAFETY BASE**

A safety base (double base) must be used at first base. If a field is not equipped with a safety base, the umpire has the option to continue the game utilizing an imaginary safety base and batter runners will be instructed to run through as though a safety base is present. All determination of safe or out per an imaginary safety base is at the sole discretion of the umpire.

## **19. SPORTSMANSHIP**

No derogatory cheers will be allowed. No deliberate attempt to distract the pitcher and/or the catcher by the offensive team shall be tolerated. We will follow the General Policies of the league and/or USA Softball rules for unsportsmanlike conduct. If a manager, coach, or parent is ejected from a game, the associated league will be contacted with a report from the umpire as to the reason for the ejection. Each league will handle their own disciplinary process that could include suspension from games.

## **20. JEWELRY**

No jewelry of any kind will be permitted in accordance with USA Softball rules.