



## **NMSA Houseleague Softball Rules**

**Version: 2024 FINAL 1.1**

The following rules apply to **NMSA HOUSELEAGUE SOFTBALL GAMES**  
unless otherwise specified.

The NMSA is unified in our goal to provide fun, safe, inclusive, and competitive, Houseleague Girls Softball programming. A Houseleague schedule is created each season for girl's age divisions U9, U11, U13, U15, and U17+. Games are played at Newmarket permitted diamonds. The following Houseleague set of rules will apply for each age division as shown. The Board of Directors will review and update, if necessary, these rules on an annual basis.

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## NMSA Houseleague Softball Rules of Play 2024

### 1. Field Set-Up

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Pitcher's rubber (m/ft)	9.14/30	10.67/35	11.58/38	12.2/40	13.1/43
Baselines (m/ft)	13.7/45	13.7/45	16.76/55	18.3/60	18.3/60
All foul lines, batter's boxes, pitching circle (8ft radius), and U11 LEAD OFF line, to be properly chalked	X	X	X	X	X
In combined age groups the older age group distances will apply.	X	X	X	X	X

### 2. Equipment

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Ball Size (cm/inches)	27.95/11	27.95/11	27.95/11	30.5/12	30.5/12
Ball Compression (max)/COR (min) shall be:	375/.52	375/.52	375/.52	375/.52	375/.52
Bats shall be approved per Softball Canada approved bats list as follows: Any bat that has a current ISF, WBSC, ASA 2000/2004/2013 or USA Softball certification Stamp		X	X	X	X
Catchers must wear shin pads, chest protectors and Catcher's helmet (or catcher's face mask & catchers' helmet) recommend with throat guard.	X	X	X	X	X
In addition, all catchers are recommended to wear the appropriate athletic support with cup (Jill for female).	X	X	X	X	X
All pitchers & infielders must wear CSA approved defensive masks.	X	X	X	X	X
Proper footwear must be worn during all games by players and coaches. No sandals, crocs or metal cleated shoes.	X	X	X	X	X
Batters/base runners must wear a batting helmet with cage and chin strap fastened under the chin.	X	X	X	X	X
Blood Rule: All cuts must be covered, and a change of clothes must be made if necessary. Reasonable time will be allowed.	X	X	X	X	X

### 3. Clothing and Jewelry

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Player jerseys are provided by each Association and numbered shirts should be visible when batting. Coaches can wear Association shirts as provided. All players should wear their team shirts tucked in. Any player or coach wearing a sweater that has been defaced or altered may not be allowed to play.	X	X	X	X	X
Due to the abrasive gravel make-up of most softball diamonds, every effort should be made to cover the majority of exposed skin on player's legs, for safety reasons. Players are encouraged to wear ball pants and shin high athletic socks. No liner socks allowed - socks must cover the ankle at minimum.	X	X	X	X	X
It is recommended exposed jewelry such as wrist watches, bracelets, any type of earrings, neck chains should not be worn due to potential injury. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry.	X	X	X	X	X

### 4. Player & Coach Eligibility

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
All players must be registered as houseleague players with the NMSA or their home organization	X	X	X	X	X
Divisional age groups - Girl's divisions NMSA	X	X	X	X	X
All coaches 18+ are encouraged to have a recent (within 2 yrs) VSS Police Check	X	X	X	X	X

### 5. Game Play – Innings and Lineup

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
All games are scheduled to have "first pitch" start at their designated times, as per the website and schedule provided. No forfeits will be granted unless to play would be considered unsafe.	X	X	X	X	X
Max 5 Innings within time limits	X	X	X		
Max 7 Innings within time limits				X	X
Max 5 runs per inning	X	X	X		
Max 5 runs, innings 1-4, Max 7 runs, innings 5-7				X	X
No new inning to start after 1 ½ hours (90 minutes) from the scheduled start time. In addition, the early 6:45pm games will have a drop dead ball time of 8:45pm. The late 8:45pm scheduled games have drop dead ball time of 10:45pm.		X	X	X	X
Players may be added to the batting line up if they arrive late, at any time during the game	X	X	X		
If a player does not arrive by 1st pitch, add to bottom of lineup. If a player still has not arrived when their turn to bat, coach can take an "out" or remove player from lineup.				X	X
A minimum of 6 players are required to play	X	X			
A minimum of 7 players are required to play			X	X	X
A 10th player may be added to outfield only	X	X	X		
Call-up For Regular Season Game A team may call-up a maximum of 2 players from the immediate lower division. Call-ups must be designated on the game sheet prior to the start of the game. Call-ups not designated at the start of the game cannot be added once the game has started. If a regular team member arrives after the start of the game, they may be added to the bottom of the batting order until a complement of ten players is reached. Call-ups must wear their own respective jerseys.		X	X	X	X
Warming up on the infield before the game is not allowed. Outfield or outside field of play only.	X	X	X	X	X

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All teams should be ready to play 15 minutes before the scheduled time. This includes completion of player lineup sheets for the Official Scorekeeper & teams in the dugout areas.		X	X	X	X

### Game Play – Completed Games, Standings & Rainouts

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
The home team will assign an official scorekeeper who will keep the score for both teams. The visiting team's scorekeeper shall verify the score.	X	X	X	X	X
Completed game - 5 inning game – 3 innings if called by the umpire (weather/light/safety) - 2 ½ if home team winning	X	X	X		
7 inning game – 4 innings if called by the umpire (weather/light/safety) - 3 ½ if home team winning				X	X
In case of a tie in the standings at the end of the Regular Season, the tie will be broken as follows: a. The record between the two teams including (1) The team with the most wins, in head-to-head play. (2) Total runs scored in all games, between both teams. b. The most wins in league play. c. Coin toss.	X	X	X	X	X
In the event of a rained-out game, a reasonable attempt will be made to reschedule the game. After the game has started and it rains, it is up to the umpire's discretion whether the game is to continue. If a game has not been canceled by the convenor by 5:00 pm (7:00 pm for late games) your team must show at the diamond or risk forfeiting the game. If games cannot be rescheduled, teams will be notified by the convenor.	X	X	X	X	X
To ensure continued updates to divisional standings, the winning team must send the score sheet to the division convenor or upload the score online within 48 hours after the finish of the game. Games sheets may also be scanned/photographed and sent to the division convenor. Failure to remit game scores may result in a tie awarded instead of the actual score.	X	X	X	X	X
In the event of a forfeit due to lack of players, winning team will be automatically awarded a 7-0 score and the win.	X	X	X	X	X

## 6. Offense

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
All team members present for the game shall bat. A batting order consisting of the first and last names, and numbers shall be entered on the official score sheet. Any players who arrive late (after their first turn at bat) must be added to the END of the batting order when they arrive.	X	X	X	X	X
Bunting is permitted		X	X	X	X
No bat throwing, it is an automatic out and the ball is dead. 1 warning per game per team will be given before player is automatically called out and the play is dead.	X	X	X	X	X
Stealing is allowed from all bases.			X	X	X
Lead-offs are allowed after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.			X	X	X
Lead-offs are allowed after the ball crosses home plate. A runner on 3rd base will be allowed to lead off when the ball crosses the plate. The runner cannot steal home on a wild pitch pass ball or a throwback to the pitcher. A chalked line to indicate a LEAD OFF (Commit) line 10 feet down the foul line from 3rd base. Any runner that touches the LEAD OFF Line if the ball is not hit will be called OUT for a lead off violation.		X			
No lead offs allowed. The player may leave the base when the ball is hit.	X				
If a runner is on 3rd, she cannot steal home, including a passed ball, wild pitch or a throwback to the pitcher. However, if the catcher decides to make a play at 3rd, 2nd or 1st base, the ball is considered to be live and the base runner at 3rd may proceed to home at their own risk.	X	X			
Once the pitcher gains control of the ball in the pitcher's circle, runners must commit themselves to whichever base they are going and continue directly to that base. If the runner stops, breaks stride or changes direction, this will be considered a leadoff, and the runner will be called out. If the pitcher throws or threatens to throw towards a base, then this is considered a play on the runner and the runner cannot be called out for "leadoff".			X	X	X
With 2 out and catcher on base, Coaches may (are encouraged to) replace pitcher and/or catcher with the last out runner/batter.	X	X	X	X	X

**Offense-Dropped 3rd Strike**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U11</b>	<b>U13</b>	<b>U15</b>	<b>U17+</b>
Batters can run on a dropped 3rd strike, if 1st base is unoccupied and less than 2 out, or at any time once there are 2 out. If there is a dropped 3rd strike behind the 1st base line, 1st baseplayer may play the orange base to reduce injury.				X	X
<b>On a dropped 3rd strike, the batter is automatically out, and the ball remains alive.</b>	X	X	X		

**Offense-Pinch Runners & Sliding**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U11</b>	<b>U13</b>	<b>U15</b>	<b>U17+</b>
A pinch runner is permitted for an injured player and should be furthest in the batting order. If the coach is aware that a pinch runner is required at the beginning of the game, they must make the umpires & opposing coaches aware before the game begins.	X	X	X	X	X
An injured batter must successfully reach base prior to a pinch runner being substituted.	X	X	X	X	X
To avoid upright collision of players, for plays at all bases the runner must slide if the defensive player has the ball or is about to receive the ball. If the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player the runner shall be declared out. The ball is dead, and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. If the act is determined by the umpire to be flagrant the offender (runner) may be ejected from the game.		X	X	X	X
A walked batter cannot advance past 1st base until the next pitch.	X	X			

## 7. Defense – Pitching

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
A pitcher will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches initially and 3 warm-up pitches for each reappearance.		X	X	X	X
Per Softball Canada rules, pitcher may use a hop.		X	X	X	X
Pitcher is allowed one foot to start back, or step back move of the pitching rubber for the stride foot.		X	X	X	X
A pitcher’s pivot foot must push off from the pitching rubber (or even with the plane of the ground if there is a hole in front of the pitcher’s plate). The pitcher is required to pause between 2 - 5 seconds before the pitch.		X	X	X	X
A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game but no more than 2 consecutive innings. After 6 innings of play, the pitching rule is reset.		X	X	X	X
A pitcher may only make two (2) appearances pitching in the same inning. This constitutes one (1) inning pitched		X	X	X	X
Call ups may pitch 1 inning if they are of lower division age group.		X	X	X	X
A coach or designated individual will be used to pitch the ball to their team. The coach or designated individual MUST pitch from the correct pitching distance. Batters will be granted 5 pitches to hit a fair ball or will be declared out. There will be no walks issued. The defensive player in the pitching position must stand on either side of the offensive coach pitcher until the pitch is released (cannot stand in front of the coach pitcher.) If the coach pitcher is hit with a batted ball it will immediately be called dead and will be counted as a pitch against the batter.	X				
At every 3-ball count, the designated coach of batter will automatically pitch the remainder of the at-bat. The designated coach shall start and complete the pitch with both feet within the pitching circle or marked line no further than 8ft in front of the pitchers mound. Additionally, the coach pitch rule will no longer be in effect in games July 1 onwards.		X			
No intentional walks permitted, otherwise all runners awarded one extra base.	X	X	X	X	X

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On any overthrow, the runner may be awarded 2 bases if the ball is deemed <b>out of play</b> .	X	X	X	X	X
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### Defense-Infield Fly Rule

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
The infield fly rule is in effect.			X	X	X

#### **Softball Canada: Sec. 52 INFIELD FLY**

a. Is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or a bunt):

- 1) When first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied.
- 2) That can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort.
- 3) Before two are out.

b. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder that positions himself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.

NOTE:

1. When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, either umpire shall immediately declare, "INFIELD FLY, IF FAIR-THE BATTER IS OUT," for the benefit of the runners.
2. The ball is live, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball.
3. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.
4. If a declared infield fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball.
5. If a declared infield fly falls untouched to the ground outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an infield fly.

### Defense-Fielder Positions and Lineup

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
All players must be played equally and fairly infield. Over the course of a game, each player must play at least one inning infield and one inning outfield.		X	X	X	X
No player can sit a second inning until every player has sat out 1 inning (and no player shall sit a third inning until all players have sat a second inning, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X
Coaches must use the official lineup sheet provided by their Association. The lineup sheet indicates scheduled positional play for all players and it must be presented to the home plate umpire if requested. The lineup sheet and the score sheet must be signed by both umpires.		X	X	X	X
A minimum of two players should rotate the Catchers position during each game.	X	X	X	X	X

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Each player, with the exception of the pitcher, shall play in their assigned infield position for at least 1 complete inning in the infield within the first 3 innings.No player shall play any position more than 2 innings in a row.		X	X	X	X
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### Defense-Defensive Obstruction

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Defensive OBSTRUCTION shall be applied per <u>Softball Canada rules (ref Sec 62).</u>	X	X	X	X	X
Where a collision occurs between a batter/base runner and a defensive player due to obstruction, the batter/runner shall be awarded a base and shall not be subject to penalty (i.e. ejection)	X	X	X	X	X

## 8. Playoffs

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Should the game end in a tie, the next inning and subsequent innings will be played according to international tie breaking rules. The last batter out in the order will begin the inning on 2nd base. The maximum runs per inning will be 5. At the end of each inning (both top and bottom must be played) the score will be examined and the team scoring the most runs will be determined as the winner of the game. The game ends once one team scores more runs than the other	X	X	X	X	X
Any player who plays less than 3 games of the regular season will not be eligible to play in the playoff games. Any medical exceptions must be applied for and approved by three members of the Board of Directors plus the applicable division Convenor one week prior to the playoffs scheduled date.	X	X	X	X	X

### Playoffs-Call-ups

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
A team may call-up a maximum of 2 players from the immediate lower division and must be called from an eliminated team first. If 7 regular players are present at the beginning of the game, the call-up may not play in the playoff game. Call-ups must be designated on the game sheet prior to the start of the game.		X	X	X	X

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Call-ups not designated at the start of the game cannot be added once the game has started. If a regular team member arrives after the start of the game, they may be added to the bottom of the batting order until a complement of nine players is reached. Should a tenth regular player arrive after the start of the game they will be substituted in where the first call up was and the call up shall be removed from the playoff game and may not re-enter. Call-ups must wear their own respective jerseys.					
The Home Team throughout the entire playoff series will be the team that finishes higher in the regular season schedule.	X	X	X	X	X

### 9. Umpires

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
Umpires are provided by the host Association, and they must be used. Face masks, chest protectors and chin pads to be supplied and worn by all plate umpires.	X	X	X	X	X
The Home team is to supply the plate umpire if an umpire has not been provided. The Visiting team may supply the base umpire if an umpire has not been provided. If umpires are provided by the Association, they must be used. Face masks to be supplied and worn by all plate umpires. If necessary, and agreed by both teams prior to the game starting, a coach may umpire plate & base.	X	X	X	X	X
In the event of a game cancelled due to umpire not available, and a makeup game cannot be scheduled, each team will be awarded a tie (a single point).	X	X	X	X	X
ALL UMPIRES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL.	X	X	X	X	X

### Disputes & Unruly Behaviour

Rule	U9	U11	U13	U15	U17+
<b>Other than asking for a check swing</b> if a base umpire is present, there are only 4 situations that warrant an appeal. A single coach must initiate the appeal & only 1 appeal per game per team. 1) Missing a base or touching the white portion of first base when a play is being made at that base.		X	X	X	X

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2) Leaving a base early when a fly ball is caught, 3) Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first. 4) Batting out of order.					
<b>NO RULE BOOKS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD OF PLAY DURING A GAME.</b>	X	X	X	X	X
Only one (1) designated coach from each team may discuss any problems with the umpire(s) throughout the course of the game, i.e. no parents. The coach must be identified prior to the start of the game. It is the coach's responsibility to control the parents of their team and ask them to abide by the rules and respect the umpires. EFFECT: The coach and or parent may be ejected from the park by the umpire.		X	X	X	X
Coaches cannot enter the field of play unless time is called & permission granted by the umpire.	X	X	X	X	X
Official team coaches and players are allowed in the dugout. Spectators & parents are not allowed.			X	X	X