

Mustang Softball Rules (Updated 3-14-25)

Age Eligibility

- Player must be **10 years of age or younger** as of **September 1 of the current year**.

Game Rules

- **Game Length:** 6 innings or **1 hour 45 minutes**. If time expires during an inning, that inning will be completed before determining the winner.
- *If time expires between innings, the next inning will still be played. The top of a new inning officially begins immediately after the third out is recorded in the bottom of the previous inning.
- *Game time will begin immediately after Coaches meeting **Scoring Rules:**
 - **6 runs per inning** until the 6th inning.
 - **No run limit** in the 6th+ innings.
- **Tie Breaker Rule:**
 - If tied after 6 innings or time limit, the **tie-breaker rule** applies:
 1. Inning starts with the last **batted out on 2nd base** and **zero outs**.
 2. Complete each extra inning as if it were the last inning
 3. Play extra innings under normal rules.
 4. After **2 extra innings**, the game ends in a **tie**.
- **Mercy Rule:**
 - **15-run rule after 4 innings.**
 - **10-run rule after 5 innings.**
 - The losing team must have an opportunity to bat in the **4th or 5th inning** unless the home team has already secured the mercy rule win.
- **Game Termination:**
 - The **umpire may call the game at any time due to darkness** for player safety.
- **Sportsmanship:**
 - Team enthusiasm is encouraged, but **all chatter must be positive** and directed only toward teammates.
 - Negative communication toward opponents will result in:
 1. **Warning** to the team's manager.
 2. **Forfeit of the game** if the issue occurs again.
 - The League Director will address the issue with the manager.

Pace of Play

- **Pace of play will be enforced throughout the game.**
- **Pitcher Warm-Ups:**
 - After the **first inning**, pitchers are allowed **5 warm-up pitches** (4 pitches, with the **5th going down**). **Play Ball!**
 - A **new pitcher** entering the game is allowed **10 warm-up pitches**.
- **Umpire Discretion:** Umpires will enforce pace of play throughout the game, including mound visits, batters getting in the box, and overall game flow.
- **No Infield/Outfield Warm-Ups After the 1st Inning.**
- **Courtesy Runners:**
 - **Highly recommended** for both **pitchers and catchers**.
 - **The runner shall be the last batted out.**
- **Coach Warming Up Pitcher Rule:**
 - If a **coach warms up the pitcher**, those pitches **count** toward the pitcher's warm-up limit.
 - The catcher must **finish the remaining warm-up pitches or perform the throw down when on the field** if the pitcher has already thrown **4 or 5 pitches**.

Base Running

- Once the ball is in the **pitcher's circle under player control**, a runner may attempt to advance or retreat **one base** unless a play is attempted.
 - **An attempted play is defined as raising the throwing arm with the ball in hand** (no actual throw required).
- **Sliding & Contact:**
 - **Players must avoid unnecessary physical contact.**
 - If a runner does not slide and **makes contact with a fielder** while there is a potential play, the runner will be **called out**.
- **Stealing:**
 - Runners on **1st, 2nd, or 3rd base** may steal at their own risk.
 - Runners **cannot leave the base until the ball has crossed the plate.**
 - **No advancement on an overthrow from the catcher's return throw to the pitcher.** *(No advancement on an overthrow on a stolen base) However, if the catcher attempts a pickoff and overthrows a base, normal baserunning applies.
 - **No continual steal on a walk (e.g., 1st to 2nd).**
- **Courtesy Runner:**
 - **Highly recommended** for both **pitchers and catchers**.
 - **The runner shall be the last batted out.**
- **Leading Off:** Not allowed.

- If a runner leaves early:
 - If the batter hits the ball, the **runner is out, but the batter remains live.**
 - If the batter does not hit the ball, the **runner is out.**

Batting

- **Continuous batting order** (late arrivals are added to the bottom of the order).
- **Thrown Bat Rule:**
 - **First offense:** Warning.
 - **Second offense:** Batter is **out**, and no runners advance.
 - **Intentional bat throwing:** **Immediate ejection** with no runner advancement.
- **Bunting:** Allowed.
- **Hit by Pitch:**
 - If a pitched ball (not swung at) **hits the batter**, she is awarded **first base**, even if the ball hits the ground first.
 - If the batter swings at a pitch that hits her, it is ruled a **strike** and not a hit-by-pitch.
- **Dropped Third Strike Rule:** Not played at this level.
- **Infield Fly Rule:** Not played at this level.

Pitching

- **Pitching Distance:** 35 feet.
- **Pitching Limits:**
 - **3 innings max per game per pitcher.**
 - **One pitch = One full inning counted.**
- **Warm-Up Pitches:**
 - **5 pitches** between innings.
 - **10 pitches** for substitute pitchers or re-entering starters.
- **Hit Batter Rule:**
 - If a pitcher hits **3 batters in one inning** or **5 batters in a game**, she **must be removed** for the remainder of the game.
- **Timeouts:**
 - Managers/coaches may request a timeout **only when play is complete** and the pitcher has possession of the ball inside the **16-foot circle**.
- **Re-Entry Rule:**
 - The **starting pitcher may re-enter only once** as a pitcher.
 - **Non-starting pitchers may not re-enter as a pitcher** once removed (*added 5-3-24*).

- A pitcher removed from the game may play any other position but cannot re-enter as a pitcher unless she was the starting pitcher.

Fielding & Substitutions

- **Team Size:**
 - Teams field **9 players**.
 - Teams may play with **8 players without penalty**.
 - If a team has **fewer than 8 players**, they forfeit after a **15-minute grace period**.
- **Minimum Play Rule:**
 - Each player must play **at least 2 innings on defense**.
- **Player Transfers & Additions:**
 - Players **cannot switch teams** within the Tri-County Girls Softball Conference.
 - **New players may only be added if the League President approves in advance.**
 - Teams may **use players from a lower division**, but they:
 - **Cannot pitch or catch**
 - **Can only play for one team** in playoffs.
- **Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed.**

Tournament Rules

- All tournament schedules **will be played as scheduled**.
- **Scheduling conflicts due to school, weather, or league-approved events must be submitted by town presidents to the tournament host before the first scheduled game.**

Equipment & Umpires

- **Jewelry:** Not allowed, except **medical alert bracelets**, which must be **taped down**.
- **Umpires:**
 - **Minimum Age: 14 years old.**
 - If an umpire is **under 17**, **two umpires are required**.
 - If an umpire is **17 or older**, **only one is required**.

* Updated 4/13/2025 for clarification