

MINORS LEAGUE SOFTBALL RULES
4th AND 5th GRADERS
Revised February 2026 by Joint Rules Committee

The following rules - as adopted by the Lake Park Little League, Okoboji Youth Little League and Spirit Lake Youth Athletic Association -are intended to protect the safety of players, promote fast, fun play, and prioritize the fundamentals of baseball and softball.

1. **Have Fun!** The Minors Softball division is intended for girls who have just completed the 4th and 5th grades.
2. Home team will be responsible for running the scoreboard from the dugout.
3. There shall be a time limit on all games of 90 minutes or 5 innings with no new inning being allowed to start once the game timer hits zero regardless of score. A new inning begins at the conclusion of the 3rd out of the prior inning. Any inning in progress prior to the 90 minutes time limit shall be allowed to finish as long as the outcome of that inning has direct bearing to the final result of the game.
4. Umpires are in charge of game timing. At the beginning of each game the umpire shall designate the "official" starting time and announce to both teams coaches the official starting time for each game. Control and the determination of the expiration of the time limit shall be the sole responsibility of the umpire. While it is the intent of the league to have the running "game time" for each contest reflected on the scoreboard, it will be the umpire's sole discretion to determine the correct time as per his "official" time he keeps. In case of clock failure on any scoreboard the umpire's "official" time will be the final time for all contests.
5. All games will be 5 innings in length or the time limit of 90 minutes, whichever should occur first.
6. All current Iowa High School Softball rules shall be in effect unless otherwise noted here.
7. Regular season games ending in a tie at the end of the time limit shall be recorded as a tie. All end of the season tournament games that end in a tie after regulation will then revert to the "International Rule" for tie-breakers (See below for full rule explanation).
8. In the event of weather or any other outside circumstances, games shall be official after four completed innings or in the middle of the fourth inning if the home team is winning or if the visiting team is ahead by 6 or more runs entering the 4th inning.
9. If a team scores 5 runs in its half of any single inning, the side shall then be considered out and the other team shall take its' turn at bat.
10. **Revised:** The 6-run rule shall be in effect after 4 complete innings of play.
11. The umpires will provide an 11" yellow softball to be used as the official game ball. The umpire will decide the condition of the ball to be used.
12. Coaches are asked to play all players equally. This means that each child on the team should play a minimum of two complete innings played per players. Players are expected to practice regularly with their respective teams. If a player is missing practices, it is up to the coach/coaches to investigate the reason for nonparticipation and attempt to alleviate the

issue. The league director should be notified and kept informed of the situation. All players including substitutes will bat in order. Any player not "on the bench and ready to play" at the time of the first pitch of any game shall be inserted into the batting order upon their arrival in the last position of the order. That player may not take the field until the next new inning for their team.

- a If a player is removed from the game due to injury, they may be removed from the batting order without penalty of an out as long as 9 eligible players remain in the lineup. The injured player may not return to the lineup (offensively or defensively) once the player has been removed from the lineup
13. A batter that is in the batter's box and takes a pitch when batting out of order will be considered out.
14. All batters shall wear an approved safety batting helmet with face mask at all times while not in the dugout. Any batters not wearing proper gear shall return to the dugout until properly equipped.
15. All pitchers shall pitch from 35 feet. Pitchers can pitch a maximum of 4 innings which need not be consecutive. A pitcher can be removed from pitching and come back to pitch again later as long as they have remained on the field in another position. Pitchers who go to the bench may not return to play as a pitcher. This is a high school softball rule.
16. Any batter being hit by a pitch or by a pitch that hits the dirt first shall be awarded first base unless the pitch would otherwise have been called a strike (i.e. swing or called strike in zone).
17. Regular balls and strikes count will be called until a pitch is put in play **or** until a 4-ball count is reached. No walks will be issued. After a 4-ball count is reached, the batting team's coach shall pitch **from the pitching rubber** until the at bat results in a ball in play or an out. There will be no HBP from a coach pitch. Base runners may only advance on a ball-in-play during coach pitch. The defensive pitch must maintain 1 foot inside the pitching circle until the ball is put in play or the conclusion of the at bat.
18. A team has one minute or 5 pitches to warm up in between innings. This would start from the time the last batter is out. The only exception would be to allow 7 pitches for a new pitcher entering in the middle of an inning. Conferences at the pitching mound with a coach can be no longer than 1 minute and no more than 3 times per game or once per inning.
19. Illegal Pitches will be called only if there is obvious, intentional or repeated misuse of the rules of pitching. One warning per pitcher will be provided. Technical violations giving no advantage shall not be penalized.
20. Base runners may lead off after the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand.
21. Home Plate is locked – The only way a runner can advance past 3rd base is on a batted ball, or a HBP (hit by kid pitch) when the bases are loaded.
22. Stealing of 2nd and 3rd base shall be allowed, however stealing of home is not. See note #21.
23. If the runner attempts to steal prior to the ball being release from the pitcher's hand, the team will be given a warning and the base runner that left early shall return to the original

base. If the pitch results in a ball in play, the ball in play remains a live ball and the baserunner that left early shall be called out. All other baserunners shall remain live. A second offense will constitute an out regardless of a ball in play. The base umpire has the final call.

24. Overthrows – Any base runner can advance to any base as long as any of the base runner(s) have been played upon after a ball has been hit into play. This includes home plate. Baserunners can advance multiple bases at their own risk, after an overthrow. Once the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle the play is considered dead and base runners cannot advance any further than the base that they were advancing to.
25. **Revised:** Balls that go out of play – If a ball is thrown out of play, the baserunner(s) will get the base they were traveling to at the time the ball left the fielders hand plus one more base. This includes home plate. Batted fair balls that hit the ground and travel past the outfield fence will be considered a ground rule double for the batter. If a runner is on second and ground rule double is called, that runner will be allowed to score. If a runner is on first base and a ground rule double is called, that runner will be sent to third base.
26. No hitter may advance to first on a dropped third strike. Any batter who gets three strikes is out.
27. Both teams shall start the game with 9 players in the field at a time. These fielders will include a pitcher, catcher, 4 infielders and 3 outfielders. A team may play the game with a minimum of 8 players if need be, but shall take an out each time the 9th batter's position comes to bat. A team must forfeit the game if they have 7 or fewer players at the start of the game. Coaches may contact other players in a lower division of the league in an attempt to have 9 players at the outset of the game. However, if 9 players from their own team are present, they may not play a player from another team. Any players playing for a team other than their own must play in the outfield and bat at the end of the batting line up. Coaches shall inform both the umpire and opposing coach of their substitute players prior to the start of the game.
 - a If a player is removed from the game due to injury, they may be removed from the batting order without penalty of an out as long as 9 eligible players remain in the lineup. The injured player may not return to the lineup (offensively or defensively) once the player has been removed from the lineup. If only 8 eligible players remain in the lineup, the team shall take an out each time the 9th batter's position comes to bat.
28. Bases shall be set at 60 feet.
29. Sliding - Excluding first base, players must slide at any base when played upon. If played upon and the runner makes contact with the fielder without sliding, the runner is out. Played upon will be defined as a defensive player in position at a base and trying to receive a throw that is in-bound. . Umpire makes the final call in these situations.
30. **Revised:** Won/loss records shall be maintained for the end of season tournament seeding with seeding based on winning percentage first and head to head second. Scorebooks are required to record the batting order, innings, outs and runs. The winning coach shall report game results to the league director.
31. Bat throwing is not allowed. Any player who throws a bat will have their team issued a warning for the first infraction. If any player from the warned team throws a bat a second

time, the player will be called out. This rule will be enforced by the umpire(s). Coaches can help monitor these activities, but the umpire(s) will make the final decision.

32. There shall be an 8' radius circle around the pitching rubber. See Iowa High School Rules.
33. Revised* Only official and League approved bats can be used. Bats should bear a certified stamp as USA or USSSA approved. Illegal bats will be removed, and the batter shall be called out by the Coach/Umpire.
34. Players, other than the pitcher, may be substituted and re-entered at any time. The batting order shall remain the same throughout the game.
35. Courtesy runners for pitchers and catchers are allowed. The last batter to make an out shall be the courtesy runner.
36. Players, coaches, and spectators shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner exhibiting good sportsmanship at all times. Failure to do so could result in ejection from a game and if need be removed from the league and forfeiture of a game.
37. Cheering/chanting will be allowed as long as it is not directed at the opposition and is positive in nature.
38. Only molded plastic spikes shall be worn at any time during a "live" contest. Any player wearing metal spikes will be immediately ejected from the game and may not re-enter.
39. All players are encouraged to wear hats where possible and have their shirts tucked in their pants/shorts.
40. Unless otherwise indicated, Iowa High School Girls' Softball rules shall apply.
41. International Tie Breaker rule for Softball: (League Tournament Only) If the game is tied after regulation the game will continue using the "International TieBreaker Rule". Under this rule, each team starts the inning with the player who completed the last official at bat, as a base **runner on second base**. Each subsequent inning will start the same until a winner has been determined.

Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather:

In the case of inclement weather all teams and players will be notified via social media, text alert, or may contact their local designated League Official for updates and details. Each League (Spirit Lake, Lake Park, and Okoboji) shall be responsible for canceling the games on their fields only! It should not be assumed that games cancelled in one town mean cancelled in all towns!