



12U League Rules

The following rules are supplementary to and supersede USA Softball rules and regulations. No draft can be conducted unless at least one Board member is present.

Age Requirement: No Player shall participate who will be 13 years old before January 1st of that year. Exceptions to age requirements may be made in special circumstances with the Director of Softball having the final decision-making authority.

1. Safety/Sportsmanship

- 1.1. **Safety:** In all situations, the safety of the players, coaches, umpires, and spectators shall be of primary importance. Players and spectators are not allowed to stand or climb on the benches or fences. It is the coaches' responsibility to control their players, parents and spectators on the sidelines regarding conduct or comments to the other team's players or coaches.
- 1.2. **Sportsmanship:** This league is instructional and will require all coaches to teach basic skills and sportsmanship. If any problems arise, it will be the coaches' responsibility to try to resolve them with the Director of Softball having the final decision-making authority when required.
- 1.3. **Conduct:** There shall be no smoking, alcohol, drugs or profanity used by anyone on the field, in the dugouts or within the vicinity of the field.
- 1.4. **Uniforms:** Only league-issued shirts and visors with proper softball pants/shorts are to be worn. All players must wear their team shirts tucked into their shorts/pants. No jewelry, bracelets, or earrings may be worn. Cover earrings with Band-Aids, tape, etc., if necessary.
- 1.5. **Helmets:** All helmets **MUST** be equipped with a face mask and must be worn while in the on-deck circle, batting, running bases, and anytime an offensive player is on the field during game play (this includes running out to grab bats).
- 1.6. **Catchers Gear:** Catchers must wear a facemask, shin guards, chest protector, helmet, and throat protector. Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a helmet and facemask.
- 1.7. **Cleats:** Cleats should be worn during games and practices on the fields. No metal cleats allowed.



- 1.8. **Cheers and Chants:** Cheers and chants are encouraged. They promote teamwork, motivate kids and add to the child's overall experience. No chants or cheers that taunt or make fun of the opposing team or individual players/positions will be allowed.

2. Field Measurements & Preparation

- 2.1. **Distance:** The field has 60' bases and the pitching mound rubber should be placed 40' from the back tip of the home plate.
- 2.2. **Dugouts:** The home team will take the first base side dugout (bench) and the visitors shall take the third base side dugout (bench).
- 2.3. **Game Ball:** The home team is to provide one (1) new 12" yellow softball to be used at each game. The away team is to provide one (1) used 12" yellow softball to be used at each game.
- 2.4. **Pre-Game Field Preparation:** The HOME team is responsible for preparing the diamond before the game. This includes:
 - 2.4.1. **Dragging the Field:** Dragging the field prior to the game. The tractor used to drag the field is located in the shed.
 - 2.4.2. **Batter's Boxes:** This is done using the metal template that is hanging in the shed at MSW. Use a spike or other object to trace the inside of the template on both sides of the home plate. Remove the template and use the chalk cart to place chalk lines where you traced.
 - 2.4.3. **Lining the baselines:** After the Batter's boxes have been lined, place a string line starting at the back tip of home plate stretching to the outside back corner of first base and continuing past to the grass. The line should run through the front outside corner (furthest corner from home plate) of the batter's box you have already lined. Use the chalk cart to place the chalk line over the string line. Repeat process between home and third base
 - 2.4.4. **Pitching Rubber:** Measure 40' from the back tip of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber for placement of the pitchers mound and secure with provided stakes.
 - 2.4.5. **Pitcher's Circle:** Place a spike at the front middle of the pitching rubber. The pitcher's circle is drawn at an 8' radius around that spike.



- 2.4.6. **On-Deck Circles:** Draw a 2.5' radius circle in front of first base bench and third base bench for the on-deck batter. These circles should be positioned safely out of play.
- 2.4.7. **Field Diagram:** Please see diagram for additional directions on how to line the field.
- 2.5. **Post-Game Field Clean Up:** The HOME team is responsible for cleaning up the diamond at the end of the game. This includes:
 - 2.5.1. Raking around and filling in holes at home plate and bases after the game
 - 2.5.2. Having the players clean up their trash around the benches. Coaches **MUST** collect the trash in their dugout and around the field.

3. Games & Scoring

- 3.1. **Scorebook:** The home score book is the official scorebook with both teams confirming the score every inning. Both teams will report game results to the league by emailing softball.gjls@gmail.com within 48 hours. All games will be scored using the Gamechanger app (the league will create the teams).
- 3.2. **Game Time Limits:** Games must begin within 15 minutes from the designated time or the teams may risk forfeiture. Games will be limited to 2 hours or six innings, whichever comes first. No new inning may start after the time has expired. The time to consider for expiration is the time of the last out of the previously completed inning, the time of the last run (if inning ended due to run limit) or the time the last at-bat was completed (if inning ended due to batter limit).
 - 3.2.1. Whichever team is winning at the expired time after a full inning is completed is deemed the winner of the game. During the regular season, 4 completed innings will constitute a finished game in the case of it being called because of inclement weather or if the time limit is reached. If less than 4 complete innings have been played, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped.

School in session rule: When school is in session, no game may go beyond 8:15PM. There will be a hard stop at 8:15PM and the score will revert to the last completed inning. The previously mentioned "finished game" rule applies.

***** Up by 15 runs after 4 innings or up by 10 runs after 5 innings*****



- 3.3. **Weather:** If thunder is heard or lighting is seen, the game will be suspended for 30 minutes. If thunder or lightning is heard or seen within the 30 minutes suspension, the 30 minutes time will start again at that moment. If suspension of play exceeds the time limit and the game has completed 4 innings, the game is final.
- 3.3.1. If less than four completed innings have been played, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped. Both coaches are to record the score, the number of outs and how much time is left to complete the remainder of the game (2 hours total).
- 3.4. **Minimum Players to Start a Game:** Each team must field a minimum of 7 players to begin the game. Failure to field 7 players in the allotted time (grace period of 15 minutes from the designated game time) will result in a forfeit. If you only have 7 players, you will take an automatic out in the 8th batting slot. If you only have 6 players (due to injury/illness after the start of the game), you will take an automatic out in the 7th and 8th batting slots. If you have 8 players, there will NOT be charged an out to the 9th batting position.
- 3.5. **Inning Batter/Run Limit:** Each half inning is completed when 8 batters have completed an at bat or 4 runs have been scored or 3 outs are made.
- 3.6. **Coaches:** Coaches must be in the dugout unless coaching 1st or 3rd.
- 3.7. **Timeouts:** Limit of 1 timeout per team per inning. Keep the game moving.
- 3.8. **Batting Order:** All team players present at the start of the game will be listed in a continuous batting order. Any player not present at the beginning of the game must be moved to the bottom of the batting order and reported to the opposing coach. Any player who must leave before the end of the game must be reported to the opposing coach and removed from the batting order. An out will not be taken in this spot unless the number of batters drops below the requirements of rule 1.10 above.
- 3.9. **The tie-breaker procedure:** This will not be used during the regular season. It will only be used during the post-season tournament. If a regular game ends in a tie, for standings purposes, each team will be awarded ½ of a point.



- 3.10. **Rainouts, cancellations and partial games:** These will need to be rescheduled by the Director of Softball. If canceled games are not able to be rescheduled within a reasonable time, it is the Director of Softball discretion to forfeit the game. The home team coach will be responsible for notifying the Director of Softball of any incomplete or canceled games.
- 3.11. **Umpires:** Umpires will be provided at this level. 1 umpire behind the home plate covers the field. In the case an umpire doesn't show a coach or parent may be used to officiate the game. .

4. Pitching

- 4.1. **Player Pitch:** Players will pitch from the rubber (40') in a fashion resembling the windmill per USA Softball rules. Portions of the movement are allowed if full mastery of the windmill is not there yet. No dead balls to be called on foot alignment. The pitcher will pitch up to 4 balls or 3 strikes for an out.
- 4.2. **Arch:** Pitches are to have minimal arch. No strikes will be called on pitches that arch above the batter's head and drop into the zone in slow pitch fashion.
- 4.3. **Warm-ups:** Only 3 warm-up pitches between innings. If a new pitcher is entering the game, she is allowed 5 warm-up pitches. This is in an effort to keep the innings moving. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after "play ball" has been announced
- 4.4. **Maximum Innings Pitched:** A Maximum of 2 innings may be pitched by 1 pitcher in a game. If a pitcher pitches at least one (1) pitch in an inning, it is considered as one complete inning. Hitting 3 hit batters in an inning will require the pitcher to be removed for the remainder of the current inning. Pitcher may return the next inning.

5. Base Running

- 5.1. **Dropped 3rd Strike:** This rule is in effect. If the batter strikes out and the catcher does not catch the ball, the batter **MAY** run to 1st base if it's unoccupied or there are 2 outs. If the batter heads toward the dugout they are out. No additional bases may be taken on an overthrow from the catcher attempting to throw the batter out at 1st base, including anyone currently on base.



- 5.2. **Overthrows:** Runners may advance extra bases on an overthrow at any base, at their own risk. In fair territory the runner may get all she can get. Play will end when the runner is stopped and returned to the previous base and the ball is in the pitcher's circle. If the ball goes out of play, each runner gets the base she is going to. Out of play is designed as the area beyond the line defined by the fences in front of the player's bench.
- 5.3. **Outfield Hits:** The is dead when the ball is controlled in the pitching circle. Baserunners may advance to the next base she is going to. Runners advance at their own risk.
- 5.4. **Dead Ball:** Play will be dead when a play is attempted on an advancing runner, when the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle.
- 5.5. **Leading Off:** Base runners may leave the base after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Runners may lead off. The 1st time a runner leaves the base early or leads off past the chalk line it is a team warning. The second and subsequent times will result in the runner being called out.
- 5.6. **Stealing Bases:** Stealing bases is permitted in 12U. Runners can't leave until the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. This may be on a pass ball or fielded ball by the catcher.
- 5.7. **Defensive Tag/Interference:** Base Runners are considered out when they do not stay within the baseline to avoid a tag. Defensive players may not stand in the baseline without the ball thus interfering with the advancing runner. A safe or out call can be made with coaches' discretion on defensive and offensive baseline interference.
- 5.8. **Safety 1st Base:** Half of the base is white (over fair territory) and half is orange (over foul territory). A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared a fair ball and a batted ball hitting the orange portion is declared a foul ball. When a play is made, the fielder must use the white portion of the base. The runner should use the orange base on the initial play at first unless the fielder is drawn to the side of the, in which case the runner would go to the white base and the field to the orange. When no play is being made at first base, the runner may touch either the white or orange portion (please make sure the 1st baseman is not in the way if the runner tries to advance to 2nd). When overrunning the base, the runner must return to the white portion. If the runner turns into the field they could be tagged out. Once the runner reaches 1st base, the runner must then use the white portion.



- 5.9. **Sliding:** Sliding is permitted (head 1st or feet 1st). Sliding is a technique that needs to be taught. A player should learn to slide into a base that is being defended properly. The catcher must be taught to protect home plate, but at the same time to protect herself by not completely covering the plate. A runner could be penalized with an out if she makes contact determined by the umpire as avoidable or crashes into a defensive player. The best option is to slide at bases or home when a defensive play is being made. Use this as a teaching moment for all players concerned.
- 5.10. **Catcher Courtesy Runner:** The coach has the option to use a courtesy runner if there are 2 outs and the catcher for the next defensive inning reaches base. The courtesy runner will be the player that recorded the 2nd out. This is to provide time for the catcher to get gear on before the next defensive inning starts. Coaches are encouraged to utilize this rule to help keep the games moving.

6. Hitting

- 6.1. **Bats:** All bats used must be official fastpitch softball bats or t-ball bats. Penalty: The batter is automatically out. Bat must be marked with an ASA or USA Softball certification mark AND not be on the list below of non-approved bats.
<https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>
- 6.2. **Safety:** Batters may not throw the bat. The first offense will result in the batter and team receiving a warning. Upon every additional offense, play is dead and the batter is out.
- 6.3. **Hit By Pitch:** Bases will be awarded to any batter who is hit by a (player) pitched ball. When a pitched ball makes contact with the batter and the batter makes an effort to avoid the pitched ball or is unable to avoid the pitched ball; the pitcher CAN be replaced by the coach at the time of the hit batter. When injury prevents a batter from running the bases, the last batter to record an out is brought in to continue.
- 6.4. **In-field Fly:** The In-field fly rule is in effect.
- 6.5. **Bunting/Slap Hitting:** Bunting/Slap hitting is permitted. Home plate is fair territory. A ball that is hit and makes contact with the plate and bounces fair IS a hit. If it bounces foul, it is a foul ball.



7. Defense

- 7.1. **Defensive Participation:** This is an instructional league meant to introduce players to the fundamentals and mechanics of the game. Participating and playing in multiple positions is crucial to developing understanding for the players. To ensure all players are able to learn the following rules are in effect at this level:
- 7.1.1. Players must enter the game on defense by the 2nd inning. Players cannot sit out twice before everyone else sits out at least once. Players are not permitted to sit on the bench for more than two innings in a row. Exceptions: Players are late, injured, sick or must leave early.
 - 7.1.1.1. **6 Inning Game:** All players must play a minimum of 2 innings of infield, 2 innings of outfield, and 4 innings defensively (catcher is an infield position). Players are NOT permitted to sit on the bench for 3 innings in a row. Exceptions: Player is late; injured, sick or leaves early.
 - 7.1.1.2. **4 Inning Games:** All players must play a minimum of 1 inning of infield , 1 inning of outfield, and 3 innings defensively (catcher is an infield position). Players are NOT permitted to sit on the bench for 2 innings in a row. Exceptions: Player is late; injured, sick or leaves early.
 - 7.1.2. Players must play in the outfield at least once within the first 4 innings of the game.
 - 7.1.3. With a six inning game, all players must play a minimum of two innings of infield, two innings of outfield, and four innings defensively (catcher is an infield position). Exceptions: Players are late, injured, sick or must leave early.
 - 7.1.4. **Position Limits:** A player shall NOT be allowed to play more than 3 innings at 1 position, except in the case of extra innings due to the tie-breaker rule (applicable only during the playoffs).
- 7.2. **Substitutions:** Unlimited substitutions for all positions, including the pitcher. Players can enter and leave a position and re-enter again. Since there is a continuous batting order, there is no need to report defensive position changes. This rule lets coaches play players every other inning, so that they feel more a part of the game. It also allows coaches to try players out at different positions and still put starters back in and out again.
- 7.3. **Outfielders:** Each team may play a maximum of 9 players, with 3 outfielders. The outfielders must have both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.



7.4. **Infielders:** Each team may play a maximum of 9 players, with 3 outfielders. The infielders cannot be on the grass or outfield. All infield positions must be playing in their designated positions. While the opposing team is at-bat, infield players are not allowed to go past the pitcher circle towards the batter until after the ball is hit.

7.4.1. **Infield Protective Mask:** Pitchers are required to wear a protective mask. Other positions are not required to wear a protective mask, though it is highly encouraged as this age is hitting and throwing harder.

8. Call-ups

8.1. **Call-ups:** If a coach finds that they will not have enough players to field a team for a given day, they reach out to the Director of Softball for call-ups. If the coach thinks he will have 9 players, they may bring up a 1 player, if eight, they may bring up 2, if seven players, they may bring up 3, and so on. No player who is called-up may pitch for the higher-level team. If a team calls-up a player and has nine players at the game, the player called-up may play a full game. If a team calls-up a player and has 10 or more players at the game, none of the players called-up may play more innings than a player on the roster of the higher-level that is at that game. Any player who is called-up must play at least 2 complete innings, even if the team calling her ends up with enough players to field a team without her. Any players called-up to a league with a continuous batting rotation must be placed at the end of the batting order. In the event of a suspended game, any eligible call-up may be used, but any call-up previously used in the game must be asked first. It is the coach's duty to let the Director of Softball know if they are going to be short.

9. Postseason Tournament

9.1. **Bracket Placement:** A win/loss record will be used to determine seeding (W=1 point, T=1/2 point, L=0 points). If there is a tie in the win/loss records, the second tie breaker will be runs allowed. If there is still a tie, the third tie breaker will be runs scored. Tournament games will have a 2 hour time limit. No new inning may be started after 2 hours. The time to consider for expiration is the time of the last out of the previously completed inning. The team that is winning at the expired time after a full inning is completed is deemed the winner of the game. If darkness hampers the security of the players, and a winner has not yet been determined, the game shall be rescheduled and will resume where the original game was stopped.

9.2. **Final Inning:** The inning batter/run limit (see rule 3.6 above) is not in effect for the last inning of tournament games. During the last inning each team will need to get 3 outs (This could be the 4th, 5th or 6th inning). If an inning starts at 7:40 this will be considered the last inning and run limit and batter limits are no longer in effect.



9.3. **Tie-Breaker:** The tie-breaker rule will be in effect if 6 innings have been completed and a winner has not been determined. The tie breaker rule is as follows:

- Each half-inning begins by placing a runner on second base.
- That runner is the player in the batting order that precedes the lead-off batter in that inning. It is the responsibility of the scorekeeper to notify the teams involved as to what player starts at second base. If the wrong player is placed on the base and it is brought to the other team's attention, there is no penalty. Place the correct player on base. This should occur whether a pitch has been thrown or if the runner has advanced a base.
- The game then proceeds a full inning, or until a winner is declared. All other rules will be in effect, with the exception of:
 - 3.6 - Inning Batter/Run Limit
 - 7.1.4 - Limit on # of innings played at the same position

10. Rule Violations and Disputes

- 10.1. Violation of any of the provisions of the above may be protested to the Director of Softball, within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled starting time of the game in which the violation occurred. The Director of Softball shall investigate and report the complaint to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee may disallow the protest if no violation can be shown to have occurred; or it may do one or more of the following: Suspension of the offending coach for one game, order this game replayed from the moment the violation occurred, or issue a formal written reprimand to the coach. Only one such warning may be issued per season.

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