

AAA, ABSA

2026

Inter-league Rulebook

Softball



AAA
2950 Schneider Dr.
Arnold, MO 63010
636.296.7474
aaainfo@arnoldathletic.com

ABSA
6350 Kneff Road
Imperial, MO 63052
636.948.3301
absasoftballbaseball@gmail.com

Softball Rules

General

Section 1.01 Playing rules not specifically covered in the inner league rule book will revert to the NFHS rule book.

Section 1.02 In ages 10U-18U, any player who before September 1st of the current season reaches the below listed birthday is not eligible to participate in that division.

Age Division	Birthday
10U	Eleventh
12U	Thirteenth
14U	Fifteenth
16U	Seventeenth
18U	Nineteenth

Section 1.03 Field dimensions

Division	Bases	Pitching
10U	60ft	35 ft
12U	60ft	40ft
14U	60ft	43ft
16U	60ft	43ft
18U	60ft	43ft

Section 1.04 Mercy rule for all divisions. 12 runs after three innings, 10 runs after four innings, or 8 runs after five innings.

Section 1.05 All games shall have a time limit of one hour and forty minutes.

Section 1.06 If time is up and the home team is ahead in the game, the game is over at the conclusion of the visitors at bat.

Section 1.07 A new inning starts immediately after the third out of the home team at bat. If there is five seconds left, you will play another inning.

Section 1.08 If a game is called due to rain, darkness, or other acts of God and cannot be resumed, it is a regulation game if based on a seven inning game, one hour of playing time has accumulated, regardless of innings played; or four innings have been completed. If a game has progressed beyond the fourth inning and is called due to rain, darkness, or other acts of God cannot be resumed, the score will revert back to the previous completed inning.

Section 1.09 All other games will resume from their exact point of delay.

Section 1.10 Players can ONLY roster and play for one team per league.

Section 1.11 The inner league requires the completion of official game sheets. Each sheet must be signed by head coach/manager of both teams.

Penalty: The team refusing to sign will forfeit the game. If this effects tie breakers (runs allowed), actual runs scored will be used.

Section 1.12 The time clock will start at the conclusion of ground rules.

Section 1.13 Ground rules: The umpires and managers shall discuss ground rules prior to the start of the game. No players, other than captains, may be on the field during ground rules.

1. Ensuring players are properly equipped and will remain so during the game. Ensuring coaches, players, and fans are aware that good sportsmanship is expected and demanded throughout the game. That head coaches are responsible for their conduct as well as their assistants, players, and fans conduct. Define “out of play” lines. Define awards when the ball goes “out of play” or gets stuck in the fence. Any special division rules. Maximum runs per inning and mercy rule. No outside food or drink. Verify accuracy of the game sheets. No Gentleman’s agreements! Any player(s) that must leave the game early as a scheduling conflict MUST be declared at ground rules.

Penalty: Leaving early, without declaring at ground rules and not injured, would be an out.

Equipment

Section 2.01 All players must be fully uniformed, which includes the following: softball pants or shorts, cap, visor, or headband; and team jersey with numbers that are non-duplicating at least six inches in height. No player will be permitted to wear “optic yellow” or “lime green” pants/shorts or any similar color that would resemble the softball. Pin stripe in these colors would be permitted.

Section 2.02 While in the field, as a defensive player; a cap, visor, or headband must be worn.

Section 2.03 Metal spikes are prohibited in 12U and below.

Section 2.04 In all age divisions, the catcher must wear all appropriate protective gear: protective catcher's helmet that fully covers both ears, with face mask and throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards.

Section 2.05 It is required that each player on the infield, including the pitcher wear a protective face mask.

Section 2.06 All batting helmets shall be NOCSAE approved.

Section 2.07 All batting helmets are recommended (but not required) to have an attached face guard in all divisions.

Section 2.08 ONLY softball bats may be used in softball games. The first infraction for a non-softball bat being used in a game will result in the bat being removed from the game and the batter being called out. The second and subsequent infractions by the same team will result in the manager being ejected. Bat restriction violations are the responsibility of the opposing team to bring to the attention of the umpires as an appeal. A violation may be appealed as soon as a player steps into the batter's box. For the purpose of player's safety, this rule does not require a pitch to be thrown in order to make the player an official batter.

Section 2.09 Softball bats must meet the NFHS bat performance standard, bear the 2000 or 2004 certification mark and not listed on the NFHS non-approved bat list. Bat barrels made of entirely wood are permitted and need not bear a stamp, but shall not exceed two and a quarter inches in diameter.

Pitching

Section 3.01 Free substitution shall prevail in all divisions. A player may be removed from a defensive position at any time and may re-enter the game at that position or any other position at any time and as often as desired except for when a manager and/or coach makes two trips to the mound to the same pitcher in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed from pitching for that inning.

Section 3.02 Five pitches are allowed as warm up pitches in between innings, not to exceed one minute. In the event the catcher is not ready, the coach will need to warm up the pitcher.

Section 3.03 An intentional walk may be given to a batter by simply informing the umpire that the defensive team wishes to walk the batter. No pitch needs to be thrown and the ball is dead.

10U division

Section 4.01 The official size softball for this division is 11 inches.

Section 4.02 Stealing of 2nd and 3rd base is allowed after the release of the ball by the pitcher. Leading off from any base and stealing home is NOT allowed. The runner must be driven home by a hit or forced in by a walk.

Penalty: Runners caught leading off shall be declared out. Runners advancing home illegally will be returned to 3rd base if she successfully makes it home.

Section 4.03 Whenever a third strike is not legally caught by the catcher, the batter shall be declared out automatically.

Section 4.04 The radius of the pitching circle around the pitching rubber is eight feet or a sixteen foot diameter.

Section 4.05 Illegal pitches (NFHS), will be called by the umpires.

Penalty: A verbal warning will be given to the pitcher on the first offense. Second and subsequent offenses will result in a ball on the batter or one base advancement for all runners

Section 4.06 Continuous walks are allowed.

Section 4.07 Look back rule is in effect.

Section 4.08 Infield fly is in effect.

Section 4.09 Run limit per inning is 6. If play is in motion, play may finish but only 6 runs are officially scored.

12U-14U Divisions

Section 5.01 The official size softball for this division is 12 inch fast pitch of competition grade.

Section 5.02 Illegal pitches, NFHS, will be called by umpires. No verbal warnings issued.

Section 5.03 Drop third strike is in effect.

Section 5.04 Stealing is allowed.

16U-18U Divisions

Section 6.01 Metal spikes are allowed.

Protest

Section 7.01 Protests: If there is a question about a rule that was possibly miss-applied, the team's coach or captain shall inform the umpire at the time of the play and before a pitch to the next batter of either team, or before the umpires leave the field of, if the play in question was the last play of the game. The plate umpire shall then inform the coach of the opposing team and the official score keeper.

Section 7.02 The protesting manager shall then have ten minutes to locate the rule in question within these rules or the NFHS rule book and present it to the umpires, who shall determine the accuracy of the protest. If the manager does not provide proper documentation to support their protest within this time limit, the protest shall be denied and the game resumed immediately from the point of interruption.

Section 7.03 Repeatedly protesting as an obvious means to delay the game shall not be permitted and will result in the head coach/manager being ejected by the umpire for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Note: A \$50 cash protest fee must be given to either the umpire in charge or the executive on duty immediately when the ten minute protest time begins.

Conduct

Section 8.01 All that is dishonorable, unsportsmanlike, and inappropriate behavior is strictly condemned. Players, coaches, managers, and/or spectators are forbidden to commit any acts to include, but not limited to: Use of words or actions to incite or try to incite spectators to demonstrate. Use of profanity, intimidation tactics, baiting, or taunting. Behavior in manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play. Charge, threaten, or touch an umpire or opposing coach. Argue ball and strike calls or other umpire judgement calls.

Section 8.02 The manager of a team is responsible for the proper conduct of their player, coaches, and spectators. If a player, coach, or spectator is ejected, the head coach shall, at a minimum, be restricted to the dugout.

Section 8.03 At the discretion of the umpire in charge or field representative on duty: players, managers, coaches, or spectators guilty of inappropriate conduct shall have to leave the field immediately and go straight to the parking lot. They are prohibited from any further contact, direct or indirect, with the team for the entire day. Any refusal to leave the premises as directed by the umpire in charge or field representative may cause the forfeiture of the game and summoning of the police. Ejected players may NOT remain in the dugout. Any additional abuses will cause the player to be removed from the premises.

Penalty: Game is immediately forfeited and person(s) involved in incident are subject to probation or suspension upon review by the inner league board.

Section 8.04 Any manager, coach, player, and/or spectator who makes contact or verbally threatens physical contact with an umpire or field representative will be ejected from the premises immediately and suspended indefinitely until the situation is reviewed by the inner league board. If needed, police will be summoned to facilitate the offender's removal from the fields. Harassment of umpires will NOT be tolerated. If there are two complaints, separate incidents, in writing, against a manager, coach, player, or parent from any umpire and it is brought to the attention of

the inner league board, via the chief umpire, those complaints will be reviewed for possible disciplinary action against the offending individual.

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