

2026 Rule Book

Tri-Area Youth League

Participating Leagues:

Belding Youth League, Cedar Springs Junior Ball League, Greenville Youth League, & Wolverine Youth Baseball

The rules listed in this booklet supersede all other rules. Unless listed below, all teams will follow all Little League International rules. ***Coaches are not permitted to agree to any rule changes and the umpires shall not allow any such changes.**

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Inclement Weather Policy

League President's or his / her designees are the only people who can cancel or call games in the event of inclement weather.

Tornado Watch/Warning & Thunderstorm Warning

In the event of a Tornado Watch or Warning that is in effect at game time those games will be canceled. Games will be called one hour before game time based on the warning status at that time. Example: If there is a game scheduled for 6:15pm and there is a tornado watch in effect at 5:15 until 6:30, the game is canceled. If at 5:15 they change the expiration time to 6:00pm the game is on. The same rule applies to Thunderstorm Warnings (Not watches). This applies to the counties of Kent, Ionia & Montcalm.

Thunder &/or Lightning

ALL players must be removed from the playing field. Play must not be resumed until 30 minutes have passed from the last strike or clasp of thunder.

**If a game is called early, 4 innings must be completed unless the home team is ahead after 3.5. (added 5.08.25)*

GAME TIME

All games begin at 6:15 pm. Umpires need to ensure teams are starting on time, so games can finish in a timely manner. Umpires will communicate to teams in between innings to hustle in and out.

GAMECHANGER

10u, 12u, & 14u only

Teams will need to use Game Changer for the purpose of tracking pitch counts and game scores at minimum. Teams need to enter if it is a strike, ball or foul.

Teams should *NOT* create their own team. Instead, teams will use the one created by the Tri League to ensure pitches, scores, etc. are recorded properly.

COACHES ON THE FIELD

8u ONLY

A maximum of three coaches are permitted on the field while their team is on offense (pitcher, base coaches). A maximum of two coaches are permitted on the field while their team is on defense. One adult (coach or team volunteer) must be in the dugout whenever there are players in the dugout. Minor volunteers are allowed to serve as base coaches, however must wear a batting helmet. A coach or volunteer from either team can be on the field as a backup catcher to help keep the game moving. This will not count towards the maximum coaches for either team.

10u, 12u & 14u

Two coaches are permitted on the field as base coaches while their team is on offense. One adult (coach or team volunteer) must be in the dugout whenever there are players in the dugout. Minor volunteers are allowed to serve as base coaches, however must wear a batting helmet.

All Baseball Age Groups

Batting

All players present at a game shall bat. If a player is unable to bat due to illness, injury, or early departure, there will be no penalty to that player's team as long as it still has the required number of players for that age group. Players arriving after the game starts are added to the bottom of the order in the order they show up.

Substitutions

With the exception of pitching, coaches may freely substitute players in the field. No position changes are allowed during an inning unless related to a pitching or catching change, injury, illness, late arrival, or early departure. Players must remain in the same batting order as when the lineup is submitted to the opposing coach. *Pitchers may not re-enter as a pitcher once pulled from the pitcher position. The catcher from the inning before is permitted to have a courtesy runner with 2 outs in 10u - 14u (this must be the last out).

Substitute Players

Substitute players are not allowed between age groups or during the playoffs. Substitute players will be permitted during the regular season within the same age group in the event that a team has less than 9 players. Any player who enters the game as a substitute player may only play in the outfield and must bat last in the batting order.

Playing time

No player may sit out a second defensive inning until everyone else has sat one inning. Exceptions include discipline, illness, or injury. Umpires and opposing managers must be notified of such exceptions.

Pitcher Warm Up

Starting or new pitchers will receive 5 warm up pitches for the first inning pitched. Thereafter they will receive 3 warm ups per inning. **All players should hustle in & hustle out.** Coaches should warm up pitchers while waiting for the catcher.

Baseball Pitcher Rest Chart (rest day does not begin immediately after the game. It begins the next day. Example - If you pitch Monday and throw 55 pitches. Rest day is Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday. You can pitch again Friday). ***ALL pitches thrown during live games play will count towards rest requirements.**

- 1-20 Pitches – 0 days rest
- 21-35 pitches – 1 day rest
- 36-50 pitches – 2 days rest
- 51-65 pitches – 3 days rest
- 66+ pitches – 4 days rest

Sliding

A runner is called out when (a) the runner does not slide or attempts to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or (b) when the runner slides headfirst while advancing. Exception: headfirst slides are permitted in 14U Baseball and Softball. Any player determined to have slid with the intention of harming another player will be immediately ejected from the game and may be removed from the league.

Cleats

Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are only permitted in 14U Baseball and Softball. Shoes with plastic or molded cleats are permissible for any division.

Leaving Base Early

Players will receive ONE warning for leaving early. After, it is an out. This is at the discretion of the Umpire.

Defensive Interference

A catcher or fielder without the ball in his/her possession has no right to block the pathway of the runner. Catcher/fielder interference shall be called and the runner will be given the base they were attempting to gain.

On deck circle is dependent on the home field.

8U Baseball

Time Limit

Games will consist of 5 innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes from game time, regardless if the game is tied. The final out in the bottom half of an inning constitutes the beginning of the next inning.

Run Limit

There is a 5 run limit per team per inning. If the 5th run is scored in the middle of a batters at bat that batter will start the next inning with a fresh count. If the game results in a tie, no extra innings will be played.

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 10 players may take the field at one time. 4 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher. A coach is allowed to stand behind the catcher as well to help speed up gameplay. The pitcher should stand to the glove side of the pitching coach.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as seven players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Pitching / # of Pitches

A coach from the team on offense shall pitch 6 pitches to allow each player to put the ball in play. The coach must stand a minimum of 10 ft from the front of home plate when pitching. A strikeout consists of 3 swinging strikes or 6 pitches. There will be no walks. After the three outs the side of the inning ends. Foul balls count as strike 1 and 2 but you cannot strike out on a foul ball. Six pitches max with the exception of a foul ball as strike 3.

Example 1:

Pitch 1 foul ball strike 1
Pitch 2 swing and miss strike 2
Pitch 3 no swing
Pitch 4 no swing
Pitch 5 foul ball
Pitch 6 no swing (they are out because of 6 pitches)

Example 2:

Pitch 1 swing and miss strike 1
Pitch 2 swing and miss strike 2
Pitch 3 no swing
Pitch 4 no swing
Pitch 5 no swing
Pitch 6 foul ball
Pitch 7 foul ball
Pitch 8 no swing (they are out because of 6 pitches)

Base Running & Stealing

Base runners may not proceed to the next base once the ball has entered the infield. No base stealing for 8U regardless of circumstances.

Bunting

No bunting

Infield Fly Rule

No infield fly rule is in effect.

Bats

All bats must meet USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) and must bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USABat – USA Baseball’s Youth Bat Performance Standard.

10U Baseball

Time Limit & Innings

League games shall consist of **six (6) innings** max. The **final out in the bottom half of an inning** shall determine the **start time of the next inning** for time-limit purposes. The **last inning shall begin ninety (90) minutes** from the scheduled start time of the game (following completion of the inning in progress). **No new inning may begin** once the last inning is in effect (even if the score is tied).

Run Limit

5 run limit. No new pitches will be thrown after 5 runs scored. **If the 5th run for that inning is scored by stealing home, the batter in the box at the time will lead off the next inning with a fresh count.** The only exception to this rule is in the last inning (SEE TIME LIMIT RULE above). In the last inning, both teams may score unlimited runs. If the regular season game results in a tie, no extra innings will be played. If the game is **tied at the completion of the final inning**, the game shall be recorded as a **tie**. Playoff games cannot end in a tie

Mercy Rule

There is no mercy rule in effect for 10U Baseball.

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 10 players may take the field at one time. 4 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as seven players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Bunting

Bunting is allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.

Pitch Count & Eligibility

A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 75 pitches or 9 outs per day, whichever comes first. A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day. Any player, who has played the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game, is not eligible to pitch on that day.

Base stealing

Runners may not lead-off. Runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball passes home plate. A runner may steal 2nd, 3rd, or home base. Delayed steals are not allowed unless the pitcher misses the throw from the catcher/fielder.

Bats

All bats must meet USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) and must bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USABat – USA Baseball's Youth Bat Performance Standard. Wooden bats are permitted.

Infield Fly Rule

No infield fly rule is in effect.

Pitching

After a pitcher walks 2 batters in an inning, **AND** (4) balls are thrown to the 3rd batter, a coach from the batting team will be allowed to enter the game to pitch to the batter until they either get a hit or strike out. No balls thrown will be counted against the player, only strikes. Coach pitch starts with the number of strikes that the batter has on them. Situation - if they have (2) strikes on them and swing and miss on the coach pitch, it is a strike out. Coaches are to encourage kids to swing the bat at pitches that are close. (continued on next page)

How does this look in gameplay?

After the 2nd walk in an inning (does not have to be consecutive) any batter following the 2nd walk that is pitched 4 balls the opposing coach (batters coach) will come in to pitch to that batter **within 5 ft of the mound / at the designated line**. The defensive team's pitcher will play in the pitcher position for defensive play. The batter will receive pitches from the coach starting at the strike count they have when the coach comes into pitch. That batter will either hit or strike out. The defensive team's pitcher will come back in to pitch to the next batter. If the pitcher throws 4 balls to that batter the opposing team's coach will come in to finish the at bat for that batter. This will continue until 3 outs, or the run limit rule is reached. The two walk criteria will reset at the top of the inning for each team. Runners may not advance to the next base on any ball that is pitched by a coach.

The coach(es) should communicate with the umpire AFTER the 2nd walk, so everyone is aware. Then, on the 4th ball of the 3rd walk, the umpire will signal the coach to go to the circle.

Key Points

- The 2walks/4 balls start over every inning (can't walk third player in an inning)
- Dead Balls do not count as a walk
 - Ball is dead after 4th ball of the 3rd walk
- Pitchers can be switched in the middle of an inning; however, the 2walks/4 ball rule does NOT reset
- Base runners may not advance bases on any ball pitched by a coach
- No stealing on a 4th ball of the 3rd walk (when the coach comes out)
- **The coach should NOT come on the field until the play is done & instructed by the umpire. Umpires should direct all players back to their original base.**
- During coach pitch the umpire can call strikes as they would during normal play
 - Players can strike out by a called 3rd strike even if pitched by a coach
 - During coach pitch the batter must either hit or strike out.
- Players should be encouraged to swing the bat and try to hit the ball when opposing players are pitching and SHOULD NOT be encouraged to wait for the coach to pitch.
- Baseball players are to be pitched to over hand
- The coach must pitch from within 5 ft of the mound / designated line.

12U Baseball

Time Limit & Innings

League games shall consist of **six (6) innings** max. The **final out in the bottom half of an inning** shall determine the **start time of the next inning** for time-limit purposes. The **last inning shall begin at ninety (90) minutes** from the scheduled start time of the game (following completion of the inning in progress). **No new inning may begin** once the last inning is in effect (even if the score is tied). Playoff games cannot end in a tie.

Mercy Rule

All 12U games are subject to the mercy rule. A game ends if: 15 run lead after 3, or **10-run lead after 4 innings by the home team**

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 9 players may take the field at one time. 3 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher.

Playing time

No player may sit out a second defensive inning until everyone else has sat one inning. Exceptions include discipline, illness, or injury. Umpires and opposing manager must be notified of such exceptions.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as eight players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Bunting

Bunting is allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.

Pitch Count & Eligibility

A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 85 pitches. A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day. Any player, who has played the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game, is not eligible to pitch on that day.

Intentional Walks

Intentional walks may be issued. Notify the umpire and 4 pitches will be added to the pitch count. No pitches will be thrown.

Base stealing

Runners may not lead-off. A runner may steal 2nd, 3rd, or home base. Runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball passes home plate.

Delayed Steals

Delayed steals are allowed. Once the pitcher has the ball on the pitching mound (or area where a mound would normally be) the runner must either commit to the base they are currently at or they must try to advance to the next base at their own risk.

Dropped 3rd Strike

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire (swinging or called) is not caught by the catcher, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. Note: a batter forfeits the opportunity to advance to first base when **he/she leaves the field of play outside the fence, removes helmet, or is touched by a player or coach.**

Infield Fly Rule

The infield fly rule is in effect. Defined as a routine pop fly with less than 2 outs, and runners on 1st & 2nd. Must be called when the ball is in the air by the Umpire. Runners can advance at their own risk.

Bats

All bats must meet USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) and must bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USABat – USA Baseball's Youth Bat Performance Standard. Wooden bats are permitted.

14U Baseball

Time Limit & Innings

League games shall consist of **six (6) innings** max. The **final out in the bottom half of an inning** shall determine the **start time of the next inning** for time-limit purposes. The **last inning shall begin at ninety (90) minutes** from the scheduled start time of the game (following completion of the inning in progress). **No new inning may begin** once the last inning is in effect (even if the score is tied). Playoff games cannot end in a tie

Mercy Rule

All 14U games are subject to the mercy rule. A game ends if: 15 run lead after 3, or **10-run lead after 4 innings by the home team**

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as eight players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Bunting

Bunting is allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.

Pitch Count & Eligibility

A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 95 pitches. A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the day. Any player, who has played the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game, is not eligible to pitch on that day.

Intentional Walks

Intentional walks may be issued. Notify the umpire and 4 pitches will be added to the pitch count. No pitches will be thrown.

Base stealing & Delayed Steals

Runners may lead-off. A runner may steal 2nd, 3rd, or home base. Advance at your own risk.

Delayed steals are allowed. Once the pitcher has the ball on the pitching mound (or area where a mound would normally be) the runner must either commit to the base they are currently at or they must try to advance to the next base at their own risk.

Dropped 3rd Strike

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire (swinging or called) is not caught by the catcher, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. Note: a batter forfeits the opportunity to advance to first base when (1) he/she leaves the baseline towards the dugout, (2) enters the dugout, (3) or enters any other dead ball area.

Bats

All bats must meet either USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) or Bat-Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) and must bear the USA Baseball logo or BBCOR Certified logo signifying that the bat meets the necessary bat standards. 2 5/8" barrel maximum. USSSA bats are not permitted. Wooden bats are permitted.

All Softball Age Groups

Batting

All players present at a game shall bat. If a player is unable to bat due to illness, injury, or early departure, there will be no penalty to that player's team as long as it still has the requisite number of players for that age group. Players arriving after the game starts are added to the bottom of the order in the order they show up.

Substitutions

With the exception of pitching, coaches may freely substitute players in the field. No position changes are allowed during an inning unless related to a pitching or catching change, injury, illness, late arrival, or early departure. Players must remain in the same batting order as when the lineup is submitted to the opposing coach. Pitchers may re-enter as a pitcher once pulled from the pitcher position. The catcher from the inning before is permitted to have a courtesy runner with 2 outs in 10u - 12u (this must be the last out).

Substitute Players

Substitute players are not allowed between age groups or during the playoffs. Substitute players will be permitted during the regular season within the same age group in the event that a team has less than 9 players. Any player who enters the game as a substitute player may only play in the outfield and must bat last in the batting order.

Playing time

No player may sit out a second defensive inning until everyone else has sat one inning. Exceptions include discipline, illness, or injury. Umpires and opposing manager must be notified of such exceptions.

Pitcher Warm Up & Game Pitching

Starting or new pitchers will receive 5 warm up pitches for the first inning pitched. Thereafter they will receive 3 warm ups per inning. **All players should hustle in & hustle out.** Coaches should warm up pitchers while waiting for the catcher. Once a pitcher starts their throwing motion, they must complete the throw... if they start the motion and then stop, this will be counted as a ball.

Dead ball

If the ball first hits the ground and then the batter, it is STILL considered a dead ball and the batter takes first base.

Hit Batter

If a pitcher hits (3) consecutive batters in an inning, they need to be switched out from the pitching position for the remainder of the inning. They will be allowed to come back in to pitch in a separate inning but if (2) batters hit again in the inning, they must be pulled from the pitching position

Sliding

A runner is called out when (a) the runner does not slide or attempts to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or (b) when the runner slides headfirst while advancing. Exception: headfirst slides are permitted in 14U Baseball and Softball. Any player determined to have slid with the intention of harming another player will be immediately ejected from the game and may be removed from the league.

Equipment

A defensive fielders mask is required to be worn when a defensive player plays the positions of 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, Short Stop or Pitcher. A batting helmet with a cage is required for all ages of softball.

Cleats

Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are only permitted in 14U Baseball and Softball. Shoes with plastic or molded cleats are permissible for any division.

Defensive Interference

A catcher or fielder without the ball in his/her possession has no right to block the pathway of the runner. Catcher/fielder interference shall be called and the runner will be given the base they were attempting to gain.

Leaving Base Early

Players will receive ONE warning for leaving early. After, it is an out. This is at the discretion of the Umpire.

Bats

Bats must be stamped ASA, USA Softball or USSSA (with a BPF of 1.2 or lower)

8U Softball

Time Limit

Games will consist of 5 innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes has elapsed, regardless if the game is tied. The final out in the bottom half of an inning constitutes the beginning of the next inning.

Run Limit

There is a 5 run limit per team per inning. If the 5th run is scored in the middle of a batters at bat that batter will start the next inning with a fresh count. If the game results in a tie, no extra innings will be played.

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 10 players may take the field at one time. 4 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher. A coach is allowed to stand behind the catcher as well to help speed up gameplay. The pitcher should stand to the glove side of the pitching coach.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as seven players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Coaches

A maximum of three coaches are permitted on the field while their team is on offense (pitcher, base coaches). A maximum of two coaches are permitted on the field while their team is on defense. One adult (coach or team volunteer) must be in the dugout whenever there are players in the dugout. Minor volunteers are allowed to serve as base coaches, however must wear a batting helmet. A coach or volunteer from either team can be on the field as a backup catcher to help keep the game moving. This will not count towards the maximum coaches for either team.

Pitching & # of Pitches

A coach from the team on offense shall pitch 6 pitches to allow each player to put the ball in play. The coach must stand a minimum of 10 ft from the front of home plate when pitching. A strikeout consists of 3 swinging strikes or 6 pitches. There will be no walks. After the three outs the side of the inning ends. Foul balls count as strike 1 and 2 but you cannot strike out on a foul ball. Six pitches max with the exception of a foul ball as strike 3.

Example 1:

Pitch 1 foul ball strike 1
Pitch 2 swing and miss strike 2
Pitch 3 no swing
Pitch 4 no swing
Pitch 5 foul ball
Pitch 6 no swing (they are out because of 6 pitches)

Example 2:

Pitch 1 swing and miss strike 1
Pitch 2 swing and miss strike 2
Pitch 3 no swing
Pitch 4 no swing
Pitch 5 no swing
Pitch 6 foul ball
Pitch 7 foul ball
Pitch 8 no swing (they are out because of 6 pitches)

Ball Size - A 10 inch ball will be used

Base Running - Base runners may not proceed to the next base once the ball has entered the infield.

Base Stealing - No base stealing for 8U regardless of circumstances.

Infield Fly Rule - No infield fly rule is in effect.

10U Softball

Time Limit & Innings

League games shall consist of **six (6) innings** max. The **final out in the bottom half of an inning** shall determine the **start time of the next inning** for time-limit purposes. The **last inning shall begin at ninety (90) minutes** from the scheduled start time of the game (following completion of the inning in progress). **No new inning may begin** once the last inning is in effect (even if the score is tied).

Run Limit

5 run limit. No new pitches will be thrown after 5 runs scored. **If the 5th run for that inning is scored by stealing home, the batter in the box at the time will lead off the next inning with a fresh count.** The only exception to this rule is in the last inning (SEE TIME LIMIT RULE above). In the last inning, both teams may score unlimited runs. If the regular season game results in a tie, no extra innings will be played. Playoff games cannot end in a tie

Mercy Rule

There is no mercy rule in effect for 10U Baseball.

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 10 players may take the field at one time. 4 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as eight players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Coaches

Two coaches are permitted on the field as base coaches while their team is on offense. One adult (coach or team volunteer) must be in the dugout whenever there are players in the dugout. Minor volunteers are allowed to serve as base coaches, however must wear a batting helmet..

Pitch Count

A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched in an inning. Pitchers are required to have one calendar day of rest after pitching in a game.

Bunting

Bunting is allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.

Base stealing

Runners may not lead-off. Runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball passes home plate. A runner may steal 2nd, 3rd, or home base. Delayed steals are not allowed unless the pitcher misses the throw from the catcher/fielder.

Pitching Distance

Pitching distance for 10U Softball is 35 feet.

Ball Size

An 11 inch ball will be used

Infield Fly Rule

No infield fly rule is in effect.

Pitching

After a pitcher walks 2 batters in an inning, **AND** (4) balls are thrown to the 3rd batter, a coach from the batting team will be allowed to enter the game to pitch to the batter until they either get a hit or strike out. No balls thrown will be counted against the player, only strikes. Coach pitch starts with the number of strikes that the batter has on them. Situation - if they have (2) strikes on them and swing and miss on the coach pitch, it is a strike out. Coaches are to encourage kids to swing the bat at pitches that are close.

How does this look in gameplay?

After the 2nd walk in an inning (does not have to be consecutive) any batter following the 2nd walk that is pitched 4 balls the opposing coach (batters coach) will come in to pitch to that batter from within the circle / at the designated line. The defensive team's pitcher will play in the pitcher position for defensive play. The batter will receive pitches from the coach starting at the strike count they have when the coach comes into pitch. That batter will either hit or strike out. The defensive team's pitcher will come back in to pitch to the next batter. If the pitcher throws 4 balls to that batter the opposing team's coach will come in to finish the at bat for that batter. This will continue until 3 outs, or the run limit rule is reached. The two walk criteria will reset at the top of the inning for each team. Runners may not advance to the next base on any ball that is pitched by a coach.

The coach(es) should communicate with the umpire AFTER the 2nd walk, so everyone is aware. Then, on the 4th ball of the 3rd walk of the inning, the umpire will signal the coach to go to the circle.

Key Points

- The 2walks/4 balls start over every inning (can't walk third player in an inning)
- Dead Balls do not count as a walk
 - Ball is dead after 4th ball of the 3rd walk.
- Pitchers can be switched in the middle of an inning; however, the 2walks/4 ball rule does NOT reset
- Base runners may not advance bases on any ball pitched by a coach
- No stealing on a 4th ball of the 3rd walk (when the coach comes out)
- **The coach should NOT come on the field until the play is done & instructed by the umpire. Umpires should direct all players back to their original base.**
- During coach pitch the umpire can call strikes as they would during normal play
 - Players can strike out by a called 3rd strike even if pitched by a coach
 - During coach pitch the batter must either hit or strike out.
- Players should be encouraged to swing the bat and try to hit the ball when opposing players are pitching and SHOULD NOT be encouraged to wait for the coach to pitch.
- Baseball players are to be pitched to over hand
- The coach must pitch from within the circle / designated line.

12U Softball

Time Limit & Innings

League games shall consist of **six (6) innings** max. The **final out in the bottom half of an inning** shall determine the **start time of the next inning** for time-limit purposes. The **last inning shall begin at ninety (90) minutes** from the scheduled start time of the game (following completion of the inning in progress). **No new inning may begin** once the last inning is in effect (even if the score is tied). Playoff games cannot end in a tie

Mercy Rule

All 12U games are subject to the mercy rule. A game ends if: 15 run lead after 3, or **10-run lead after 4 innings by the home team**

Defensive Lineup

A maximum of 9 players may take the field at one time. 3 in the outfield, 4 in the infield, 1 pitcher, 1 catcher.

Minimum Players

Teams may play with as few as eight players. There is a 10-minute start of game grace period after which (and at any time during the game) a team short of players will forfeit the game. Coaches shall share players and play a scrimmage in the event of a forfeit for the remainder of the time limit.

Coaches

Two coaches are permitted on the field as base coaches while their team is on offense. One adult (coach or team volunteer) must be in the dugout whenever there are players in the dugout. Minor volunteers are allowed to serve as base coaches, however must wear a batting helmet.

Bunting

Bunting is allowed. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.

Intentional Walks

Intentional walks may be issued. No pitches will be thrown.

Base stealing

Runners may not lead-off. Runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. A runner may steal 2nd, 3rd, or home base. Delayed steals are not allowed unless the pitcher misses the throw from the catcher/fielder.

Pitching Distance & Limit

Pitching distance for 12U Softball is 40 feet. **There is no pitching limit for 12u SB.**

Ball Size

An 12 inch ball will be used

Infield Fly Rule

The infield fly rule is in effect. **Defined as a routine pop fly with less than 2 outs, and runners on 1st & 2nd. Must be called when the ball is in the air by the Umpire. Runners can advance at their own risk.**

Dropped 3rd Strike

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire (swinging or called) is not caught by the catcher, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. Note: a batter forfeits the opportunity to advance to first base when **he/she leaves the field of play outside the fence, removes helmet, or is touched by a player or coach.**