Tri-County Softball League

2025 Playing Rules

Any rules not covered herein will be covered under current USA SOFTBALL official fast pitch rules. An electronic copy of the rules can be found here. https://www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/

There will be six divisions; 18U, 16U, 12U, 10U, 8U, and 6U. Players may play in their age-appropriate division and up but can never play down. A player may only be rostered on one team regardless of age group. Teams must consist of 50% of age-eligible players. If a team does not have enough players from their roster, they may call up a girl from a younger age group if they play *within the same association*. Players from teams in the same age group cannot be used. A player who chooses to be rostered on an older team cannot be called down to play on a younger team, regardless if her age is appropriate. Any girl who is not offered a team can petition the Tri-County Softball League Board of Directors to be placed with a team requiring players within the League.

FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATION TOURNAMENT PURPOSES ONLY: All travel ball players need to be identified on team rosters. If an association wants to attend a tournament, but cannot due to a lack of players due to travel ball players being unavailable, a team may fill the travel ball player(s) spot(s) with players from another team within the same association and age bracket. (The travel ball players would have to be unavailable due to playing in another tournament that weekend.) The team would have to pay $30 to register the team with USA Softball so the umpire insurance would be valid.

No player, other than a travel ball player, may be replaced with a player rostered on another team in the same age bracket. If this is the case, you would have to fill the roster by calling players up from a younger age bracket.

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IMPORTANT DATES

- 03/01 | All association registrations completed
- 03/30 | Reasonable estimate of # of teams due to UIC
- 03/30 | Rosters Due | Bring to scheduling meeting
- 03/30 | SAFE SPORT Certification Due | Bring to scheduling meeting
- 03/30 | Proof of Insurance due | Bring to scheduling meeting
- 04/06 | Pre-Season New Coaches Clinic and Rules Meeting | Before 8U/6U Scheduling04/06 (6 PM) | Scheduling Meeting |12U 4 PM, 10U 5 PM, 8U/6U 6PM | Ventisei

  ***NOTE: Scheduling meeting is mandatory. If a Coach cannot attend the draft, please send a proxy. Each team must have a representative to build their schedule at this meeting.*
- 04/13 | Schedules due to UIC so Umpires can be assigned
- 04/28 | Season Begins (6U, 8U and 10U)
- 05/12 | Season Begins (12U)
- 06/08 | Teams must declare if they plan to play in postseason
- 06/13 | End of Season for all teams
- 06/16-06/26 | Playoffs | Sites and times TBD
- 6/22-6/23 | 8U Championship Tournament | Union Times TBD
- 06/25-06/26 | Championship Games | Shenango | Times TBD
- 07/02| All Star Games | Shenango | Times TBD

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sporting behavior is one of the fundamental ingredients to the continued success and enjoyment of any youth education-based sports and activities.

Playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity, and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part.

USA Softball is concerned that unsporting behavior in youth education-based athletics has increased across all sports. As a result, we must make sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for all involved.

Sportsmanship, or good sporting behavior, is about treating one another with respect and exhibiting appropriate behavior. It is about being fair, honest, and caring. When these types of appropriate behavior occur, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone.

Coaches set the tone at athletic contests with their display of sportsmanship. If these individuals act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators, and others. If coaches, however, are complaining constantly about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same.

The adage Let the Coaches Coach, Players Play, and Officials Officiate, is the motto we must display and promote. Coaches you are tasked to coach your team and prepare your team for the contest. Players will participate, support, and cheer on teammates and opponents in a sportsmanlike manner. Officials must be allowed to enforce the rules of the contest fairly and equally and must be able to officiate the contest without question.

There must be a collaborative working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest. Everyone has their role to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests.

Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches, and other bench/sideline personnel. A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved.

Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, game administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators. A proactive approach by game administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed.

If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials – or others in the stands – those individuals should be removed from the contest by game administration.

In recent years, a heightened level of unsportsmanlike behavior has been occurring by spectators at all sporting events, and it must be stopped. The use of demeaning language, or hate speech, by players, coaches, parents, and other fans must cease.

Sports and other activities exist to lift people, not to demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect. Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will not be tolerated.

Good sports win with humility, lose with grace, and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.

Game Officials must be aware of any Unsportsmanlike or Racially insensitive remarks between players or Coaches. Game Umpires have the sole authority to handle all issues on the field and by participants, coaches, and team personnel. Once a Game Official by rule assumes authority for a game, they are the final word and have the final say in all matters dealing with sportsmanship and with the actions between the coaches, players, and team personnel.

If an umpire hears or witnesses any act that is unsportsmanlike or racially insensitive, they must act, and it must be addressed immediately and firmly.

If an official fails to hear the remark or see the incident and it is reported to them by a player or coach, the umpire must suspend play, approach the potentially offending team's head coach, and report to that coach what they were told.

Ejections should be strongly considered when facing this type of infraction.

Coaches are reminded they are responsible for their teams and should not interact with the opposing team.

FEES

Registration

- 6U $30
- 8U $60
- 10U $75
- 12U and above $95
    - 2025 Rates, USA Softball $30 per team, Arbiter Assigner Fee $25 per team

Umpires

- 8U Umpires - $40 Per Game
- 10U Umpires - $60 Per Game (1 Umpire); $100 per game (2 Umpires); $120 per game (3 Umpires)
- 12U and above Umpires - $70 Per Game (1 Umpire); $120 Per Game (2 Umpires); $135 Per Game (3 Umpires)
- When three umpires are used in league championship games, each of the two teams pays one umpire and the league pays one umpire.
- Umpires for All-Star game $ $120 split between 2 umpires. League pays both.
- Cancellation Policy
    - Umpires ask that if conditions are questionable for a game the notification process begins 90 minutes before game time
    - If a game is canceled for anything other than weather or field conditions on the day of a game, an assignment fee of $10 is owed to the umpire to help recoup his/her lost game earnings.
    - If a game is canceled due to weather or field conditions, you must call with a make-up date **WHEN** calling to cancel the umpire.
    - Travel fee of $10 if a game is canceled due to weather after an umpire arrives at the field. The home team is responsible for the travel fee.
    - If a game is started (a pitch is thrown), and then stopped, half the game fee is returned to the coaches.

GENERAL GAME RULES

- Games are 6 innings (10U and younger) or 7 innings (12U and older) or 1 hour 30 minutes unless otherwise noted in supplemental rules. If the time limit is reached teams will finish the inning they were in when time expired.
- The start time of an inning is at the time of the third out of the prior inning
- If a game is terminated for darkness, weather, field conditions, or umpire's call, five full innings, 4-1/2 innings if the home team is leading, or after 1 hour, will be declared a regulation game. **Regular Season only.
- Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.
- Run rules for all age groups who record a score are: 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, and 8 runs after 5 innings. Since the score is not kept there are no run rules for the 6U Division
- If there is a tie at the end of regulation (6 innings (10U and younger) or 7 innings (12U and older) or 1 hour 30 minutes), one inning using the USA SOFTBALL international tiebreaker will be played. If the score is still tied after that inning, the game will be considered a tie.
- Line-up cards ARE required
- Every team must turn in a roster to the league secretary before the first game. If rosters are not turned in prior to the first game, teams will not be able participate.
- There is a one (1) minute time limit between half innings. If the one minute expires the pitcher may not be granted any more warm-up pitches.

GENERAL PLAYING RULES

- Pitching Distance – 43 ft (35 ft for 10U and 8U), (40 ft for 12U)
- Base Distance – 60 ft
- The home team is to provide one new and one used yellow stitch 12-inch (12U and older) or 11-inch (10U and younger) ball with COR of .47 with .375 compression for each game. The ball must be ASA or USA SOFTBALL stamped. An example of this is a Dudley SB12 or Dudley SBC11 ball.
- Catchers must wear helmets with facemasks and throat protectors, chest protectors, and shin guards.
- Pitching regulations will be according to USA SOFTBALL rules.

- Only 4 coaches, including the scorekeeper, are allowed in the dugout and warm-up area.
- Shorthanded Rule while batting the entire roster: Batting the entire roster by either manager is permitted but extra batters must bat the entire game or take an out as per USA SOFTBALL short-handed rule. Exception 1: If an injury occurs to any of the players, an out will not be taken unless the total number of players is less than 9. Exception 2: If a player is ejected the game will continue unless the number of eligible players falls below 8. When batting through the entire roster, free defensive substitution applies.
- Ejections – If a player is ejected from the game an out will be recorded each time the absent player is due to bat. Exception: if the ejected player's team is not batting their entire roster and has substitute players available, a substitute can be inserted in the batting order for the ejected player.
- Standings will be kept using a point system. A win is worth 3 points, a tie is worth 2 points, a loss is worth 1 point, and a forfeit is worth -1 point. *Tie Breaker: record (win percentage), head-to-head, runs allowed, runs scored.* **Winning team is responsible for entering the score into a pre-approved site or page following the game.**
- Rainouts must be rescheduled within 72 hours or both teams receive a loss. If the home team attempts to reschedule a game by giving the visitors at least 3 valid dates in which the visitors do not already have a scheduled game, the home team is awarded 2 points for standings (a tie) and the visitors receive a forfeit (-1 point).
- Any game that is protested must be protested as per USA SOFTBALL Rule Book. Protest must be filed within forty-eight (48) hours to the league board of directors
- Coaches from both teams and the umpire are to review all field rules and any questions prior to the start of every game.
- At any point when a winner can be determined by the run ahead rules or six (6) or five (5) runs per inning rule (determined by age division), the game is over. (For example, if the away team goes ahead by 7 runs in the top of the 7th inning, the game is over.)
- Maximum runs per half inning: The maximum number of runs allowed per half inning is strictly limited; 12U runs are limited to six (6); 10U and 8U runs are limited to five (5); and 6U runs are limited to three (3). No exceptions. Additional runs shall not be counted toward the score even if additional runs are scored in the event of an over-the-fence homerun or as a result of the continuation of the last play of the half inning.
- Stealing – Leading off is permitted when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. (10U and older)

- Pitching – Pitchers must start with their pivot foot in contact with the pitching rubber but do not have to have their non-pivot foot in contact with the pitching rubber. Pitchers can take a step backward with their non-pivot foot before, simultaneously, or after the hands are brought together to start the pitch.
    - If an illegal pitch is called it will result in a ball awarded to the batter; no runners will advance.
- Equipment – Approved bats will have ASA 2000, ASA 2004, or USA SOFTBALL certification marks. If a batter hits with an illegal, non-approved, or damaged bat, the batter is out, runners must return to the previously occupied base, and the head coach will be restricted to the dugout only for the remainder of the game. Helmets must have a non-mirror-live/non-glare surface.
- Any time a change is made with a Pitcher or Catcher, the coach must inform the home plate umpire for Courtesy Runner and warm-up purposes.

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR 12U DIVISION

- 12U Pitching Distance is 40 ft.
- Games are 7 innings in 12U.
- Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team scores six (6) runs, (whichever comes first).
- If the time limit of 1 hour 30 minutes is reached, the teams will complete the inning the game was in when the time limit was reached. For example, if the away team makes the third out at 1 hour 29 minutes, another complete inning is to be played.
- The start time of an inning is at the time of the third out of the prior inning.
- Coaches may choose from the following options for batting order:
    - Bat 9
    - DP/Flex
    - Bat 10 and utilize one EP and the DP/Flex (Flex is listed in the 11th position) per USA SOFTBALL rules
    - Bat Entire roster (free defensive substitution)
- Minimum number of players – A team is not permitted to begin a game with fewer than eight (8) players. If, at any point, for any reason, the number of eligible players drops below eight (8) gameplay cannot continue and the shorthanded team forfeits.

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR 10U DIVISION

10U GAME RULES

- 10U Pitching Distance is 35 ft.
- Games are 6 innings in 10U.
- Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team scores six (5) runs, (whichever comes first).
- If the time limit of 1 hour 30 minutes is reached, the teams will complete the inning the game was in when the time limit was reached. For example, if the away team makes the third out at 1 hour 29 minutes, another complete inning is to be played.
- The start time of an inning is at the time of the third out of the prior inning.
- Minimum number of players – A team is not permitted to begin a game with fewer than eight (8) players. If, at any point, for any reason, the number of eligible players drops below eight (8) gameplay cannot continue and the shorthanded team forfeits.
- Infield fly rule will be enforced

10U PITCHING RULES

- If a pitching change is made, you MUST report the change to the umpire at the beginning of the inning.
- Each team must pitch a minimum of 2 girls per game.
- In the first 4 innings of the game, no single girl can pitch more than 2 innings. After 4 complete innings, any pitcher can finish the game.
- A player is permitted to pitch partial innings but note a complete inning for inning tracking purposes is considered one legal pitch thrown in a game.
- Girls who pitched in previous innings can re-enter the game assuming the inning count rules are followed.
- Umpiring is done from behind home plate.
- Illegal pitch calls will not be enforced. If an umpire determines a 10U pitcher is pitching illegally, the pitcher's head coach should be notified, and the illegal action explained. No subsequent notifications will be issued to that pitcher in that game.

10U BASE RUNNING RULES

- Runners can only steal 1 base per pitch. Runners are allowed to leave the bag (leadoff) when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

- The runner on third must be batted in. There is no stealing home, except for the two situations described below:
    - Situation 1: If a runner is positioned at third base and there is an attempt to pick that runner off at third and it is an overthrow, the runner <u>can</u> advance home.
    - Situation 2: If an attempt is made to pick a runner off by throwing behind the runner, all runners are free to steal one base at their own risk. For example, if a pickoff attempt is made on a runner leading off first base, all runners are unlocked to steal a base.
    - A runner on third base would not be unlocked if the catcher attempts to throw a base runner out at second base who is stealing from first base because the catcher is not throwing behind the runner whom they are trying to get out.
    - If the runner is going from second base on a steal to third base and there is an overthrow on the runner going to third, the runner <u>cannot</u> advance home due to only stealing one base per pitch.

10U BATTING RULES

- Up to two (2) batters can walk per inning, in the traditional fashion. After two batters have been walked, any subsequent four-pitch counts will result in the coach entering the game as a pitcher to finish that at-bat.
    - A hit-by-pitch is not considered a walk for these purposes
    - Walks are counted per inning and not per pitcher, for example, if Pitcher A is replaced with Pitcher B in an inning after walking two batters, any subsequent four-pitch counts by Pitcher B will result in Coach Pitch.
- Coach pitching from the pitching rubber is pursued by the offensive team using the existing STRIKE count on the batter. The player that is the pitcher must remain near the rubber with both feet <u>INSIDE</u> the pitching circle during delivery of the coach pitch.
- Coaches who are pitching are encouraged to throw an arc-less pitch, much like a regular fastpitch softball pitcher would throw. The coach does not have to do a windmill windup when pitching to the girls.
- Umpires are instructed to continue to call pitches in the strike zone, that are not swung at, strikes. A player batter can strike out looking vs a Coach Pitcher.

- A player struck by a pitch thrown by her coach is not awarded first base (no walks, no hit by pitch).
- If the pitching coach is hit by a batted ball the ball is Dead and no pitch should be recorded. Runners return to their previous bases and the at bat resumes with the previous strike count. Exception is if the umpire rules it intentional. If intentional, the ball is dead, interference is called, batter is out, and all runners return to the last occupied base.
- Batters may not bunt when a coach is pitching.
- Slappers may continue to slap if slapping attempts were made before the coach pitcher entered the game.
- When a ball is hit from a coach pitch, the batter is allowed a maximum of 2 bases unless it is an over-the-fence homerun. Runners already on base are allowed as many bases as they can get.
- A batter may not show bunt and pull back to FULL swing on the same pitch. A batter is permitted to show a bunt on one pitch and full swing on a different pitch in the same at bat.
- The dropped 3rd strike rule does not apply in the 10U division.

10U COACHING/ROSTER RULES

- Teams should play with 10 fielders. During the regular season, if 10 fielders are not available, teams can play with 9 players without being penalized. If a 10th player arrives after the game has started, that player must be immediately put in the lineup.
- During playoffs, teams must have 10 girls to not be penalized. Teams with 9 players will have to take an out when the empty roster slot is up to bat (during playoffs only).
- Coaches may choose from the following options for batting order:
    - Bat 10
    - DP/Flex
    - Bat 10 and utilize one EP and the DP/Flex (Flex is listed in the 11th position) per USA SOFTBALL rules
    - Bat Entire roster (free defensive substitution)

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR 8U DIVISION

8U GAME RULES

- 8U will be competitive, but also instructional.
- Games are 6 innings or 1 hour 30 minutes. Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team as five (5) base runners cross home plate safely (whichever occurs

first). *On the final out of an inning, if a fair ball is hit a play must be made at a base to try and record an out.*

- A maximum of 10 players will play in the field.
- There will be 4 outfielders, 4 infielders, a pitcher and a catcher.. No rovers allowed.
- Playing Time – All players must play in the field at least 2 innings. As an additional guide, the players should be rotated between positions to provide additional experience and instruction
- Free substitution on defense is allowed.
- **DURING PLAYOFFS ONLY:** Minimum number of players – A team is not permitted to begin a game with fewer than eight (8) players. If, at any point, for any reason, the number of eligible players drops below eight (8) gameplay cannot continue and the shorthanded team forfeits.
- **DURING PLAYOFFS ONLY:** Playoff games will be coach pitch only.

8U PITCHING RULES

- Modified Player Pitch rules:(Regular Season only)
    - Player pitch is not mandatory. Both teams must agree pre-game that player pitchers will be used.
    - A player pitcher can only be used in the first two innings of a game.
    - A properly equipped catcher in a catcher's stance is required for player pitch.
    - 35-foot pitching distance; 11" USA/ASA Ball
    - A player pitcher must pitch from the pitching rubber.
    - Player pitcher throws up to 4 pitches to each batter faced, if after 4 pitches an outcome has not been reached (ball put in play, hit batter, strikeout) a coach pitcher will assume the pitch count and throw up to 4 more pitches (8 total) to reach an outcome.
    - The offensive team will be required to place a coach/pitcher behind the player pitcher to umpire balls and strikes when a player is pitching
    - Girls who pitched in the previous inning can re-enter the game assuming inning rules are observed.

    - There are no walks.
    - If a batter is hit by a player pitcher, the batter will be awarded first base.

- If a player pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning or 2 consecutive batters the player pitcher must be replaced by a coach pitcher or another eligible player pitcher for the remainder of the inning.
- Batters can not advance on a dropped 3rd strike.

8U HITTING RULES

- Coach Pitch
  - A batter received a maximum of 8 pitches. If the 8^{h} pitch is fouled or subsequent pitches are fouled, the batter will continue to bat until the ball is hit fair or the player strikes out.
  - A foul tip caught by the player catcher on or after the 8th pitch of the at-bat is a strikeout.
  - No walks, no hit by pitch.
  - No Bunting
  - If a hit ball strikes the coach-pitcher the ball is called dead, and the batter continues batting.
  - The adult pitcher uses only 1 ball. The player catcher is active in the game and retrieves the ball on every pitch.
  - All players present must be placed in the batting order
  - Use of an 11-inch softball and an ASA-approved bat is required.
- Player Pitch
  - A batter receives a maximum of 4 pitches from the player pitcher. If an outcome is not reached in 4 pitches (strikeout, ball in play, hit-by-pitch), a coach pitcher will come in to continue the at-bat up to 8 pitches total (4 from player, 4 from coach). If the 8^{h} pitch is fouled or subsequent pitches are fouled, the batter will continue to bat until the ball is hit fair or the player strikes out.
  - A foul tip caught by the player catcher on or after the 8th pitch of the at-bat is a strikeout.
  - No walks
  - No bunting
  - If a player batter is hit by a pitch from a player pitcher, that batter will be awarded first base.

- If a hit ball strikes the coach-pitcher or umpire the ball is called dead, and the batter continues batting.
- The player pitcher uses only 1 ball. The player catcher is active in the game and retrieves the ball on every pitch.
- All players present must be placed in the batting order
- Use of an 11-inch softball and an ASA-approved bat is required.

8U FIELDING RULES

- No intentional rolling of the ball from player to player or the circle.
- A player catcher should be played unless the team is shorthanded and/or the opposing coach agrees.
- Player Catcher must be wearing all proper protective catching equipment. Catcher's Helmet, chest protector, and shin guards.
- The use of fielding masks is strongly recommended.
- Defensive players should throw the ball to another player to complete put-outs when possible (e.g., the pitcher throws to first after fielding a grounder, rather than running to the base).
    - Natural unassisted putouts are encouraged and permitted, for example, a SS stepping on 2B for a force-out, but for safety gameplay reasons, the following rules should be observed:
        - The pitcher is not permitted to run to any base to complete a force out. They are permitted to tag a player advancing to any base.
        - Outfielders must complete a throw to the infield to record an out or stop play. They are not permitted to run into the infield for a force or tag out of a runner.
    - Failure to follow the rules will result in the runner being safe.

8U BASE RUNNING RULES

- Every time a ball is put in play, batters and runners may attempt to get as many bases as they can, and fielders will attempt to make an out.
- Stopping Play – Play will be stopped in the following ways

    - When any play is made at a base resulting in an out, whether forced or tagged out, the ball is dead once the defensive player has control of the ball.
    - When any play is made at a base in front of or on a runner ***OR*** the ball is thrown to a base in front of or on a runner **AND** an infielder or pitcher has control of the ball.
- Once the play is dead, runners not more than three-quarters to the next base must return to the last base touched. There will be hash marks at 3/4 to help make these calls.
- Overthrows
    - If a ball is overthrown, a maximum of 1 base may be attempted by offensive players <u>at their own risk</u> and 1 attempted throw by a defensive player per batted ball, then play will be stopped.
    - One overthrow per batted ball
    - 3/4 Hashmark rule is ignored regarding a runner advancing due to an overthrow.

8U COACHING RULES

- The maximum number of defensive coaches in the field of play at any one time is three.
    - During the game, when a ball is not in play it is permissible for coaches of both teams to instruct players on what to do in the upcoming situation.
    - Coaches are also encouraged to teach players based on situations that occurred on a previous play.
- There will be no umpires in regular season play; coaches are responsible for umpiring duties
    - Offensive Base Coaches will call fair and foul on their respective lines and safe/out calls at their bases.
    - The Pitching Coach will call balls and strikes for the player pitcher and catch or no catch on fly balls and safe/out calls at second base and home plate.
- There will be no arguing of calls, no exceptions.
- Coaches need to work together on the field, so the atmosphere of the game is instructional and fun.

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR 6U DIVISION

6U GAME RULES

- Games will be fun and instructional.
- No score is kept.
- Use of an 11-inch softball is required.
- Games are 6 innings or 80 minutes. Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team as three (3) base runners cross home plate safely (whichever occurs first). *On the final out of an inning, if a fair ball is hit a play must be made at a base to try and record an out.*
- If the time limit of 80 minutes is reached, the teams will complete the inning the game was in when the time limit was reached.

6U BASE RUNNING RULES

- All runners may advance as many bases as possible on a hit ball
- Every time a ball is put in play, batters and runners may attempt to get as many bases as they can, and fielders will attempt to make an out.
- Stopping Play – Play will be stopped in the following ways
    - On a ball hit in the infield, when a play is attempted at a base in front of or on a runner (Tag Play) ***OR*** the ball is thrown to a base in front of or on a runner regardless of if the offensive player is safe or out **OR** the ball is thrown to the player pitcher or coach pitcher. (Defensive possession of the ball is not required)
    - On a ball hit into the outfield, play is stopped when the ball is returned to the infield dirt. (Does not require player possession)
    - After play is stopped, runners will be awarded the base they are advancing to when the ball enters the infield from the outfield. (IE A runner is between second and third when the ball is thrown into the infield the runner is required to stop at third base.)
- There is no advancement on overthrows.

6U BATTING RULES

- Players will be given 5 pitches to hit off a Coach Pitcher. If the hitter does not hit a fair ball in 5 pitches, they will be allowed to hit from a tee.
- Helmets with face masks are mandatory when batting or running bases.
- A ball not hit outside of an 8-foot semi-circle measured from the back point of home plate out toward the pitcher's circle and within the baselines will be considered a foul ball.

6U FIELDING RULES

- All players are encouraged to play the field each inning
- Players are encouraged to make a play/throw to a base for an out
- Outs are recorded
- The Coach pitcher may use up to 3 balls at one time to help speed the game up.
- A player catcher is permitted but the player must be wearing all proper protective catching equipment. Catcher's Helmet, chest protector and shin guards.
- If a player catcher is used, there should be a coach to assist the catcher to help speed the game up.
- The use of fielding masks is strongly recommended.
- Defensive players should throw the ball to another player to complete put-outs when possible (e.g., the pitcher throws to first after fielding a grounder, rather than running to the base).
    - Natural unassisted putouts are encouraged and permitted, for example, a SS stepping on 2B for a force-out, but for safety gameplay reasons, the following rules should be observed:
        - The pitcher is not permitted to run to any base to complete a force out. They are permitted to tag a player advancing to any base.
        - Outfielders must complete a throw to the infield to record an out or stop play. They are not permitted to run into the infield for a force or tag out of a runner.
    - Failure to follow the rules will result in the runner being safe.

6U COACHING RULES

- During a game, when the ball is not in play, it is encouraged for coaches of both teams to instruct players on what to do in the upcoming situation.
- Coaches are also encouraged to correct players on any mistakes made on a previous play.
- Coaches need to work together on the field, so the atmosphere of the game is instructional and fun.
- Any rule that is not covered by these rules will go back to either 8U league rules or USA SOFTBALL Rule Book.

ALL-STAR SELECTION

- The purpose of the All-Star game is to recognize our talented players from across the League and reward those whose contributions stood out throughout the season. Each team will have the opportunity to send at least one representative with additional roster spots awarded to teams who finish well in the regular season and/or the playoffs. An exact formula for selection will be agreed to by the Board of Directors on a season-by-season and league-by-league basis depending on the number of teams, venue, geographic location, and other factors. The league wants to recognize and reward regular season results as well as the playoffs. To that end, the following should be used as an example for determining the number of players chosen from each team – assuming a 14-team league:
    - Each team registered with TCSL will be permitted to send one player to the all-star game (14 players total)
    - Upon completion of the regular season, teams finishing in the top 6 of the standings will be awarded an additional all-star spot. (20 players total)
    - In the playoffs, the four semi-finalist teams will receive an additional all-star spot (24 players total)
    - The two championship teams will receive an additional all-star roster spot. (26 players total)
- As an additional guide, a maximum of 14 players per team should be used to make roster management easier.
- The Managers appearing in the Championship game will be offered an opportunity to coach the All-Star teams. If unavailable, the board of directors will work down the list based on playoff finish.
- Once players and Head Coaches have been chosen, the board of directors will work to split the teams evenly based on pitching, geographic location, available coaches, etc.

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR PLAYOFFS

- Playoffs will start on the dates listed in the “Important Dates” section of these rules for each age group. All regular season games including make-up games need to be completed by the Saturday prior to the playoff date. If not completed on time, unplayed games will be scored based on league rules.
- All teams will be in the playoffs. Teams will be seeded by points. Tri-County softball league will make a complete playoff schedule available for all ages well in advance and before playoff teams are finalized.
- All teams must inform the league if you are not intending to play in the playoffs by the cutoff date listed in the “Important dates” section of these rules. If you forfeit a game in the playoffs, you owe the full umpire fee listed in the “Fees” section of these rules.
- Playoff standings tiebreaker rules: Record (Win percentage), head-to-head, runs allowed, runs scored
- Playoff games can only end due to the time limit expiring or 6+ innings played (10U and younger; or 7+ innings played (12U and older) unless the run rule comes into effect. If a game needs to be called for weather or lack of light, teams will return to finish the game where it was stopped.
- Higher seeded teams will be awarded home field except for the championship games where a coin toss winner will have the choice.
- The championship game does not have a time limit. A full 6-inning game (10U and below) or 7-inning game (12U and above) will be played unless the run rule comes into effect.
- The championship game will be played at a site and time decided by the league board of directors. League championship games and all-star games will have 3 umpires. Each team will pay one umpire. The league pays the third umpire.
- USA SOFTBALL rules and Tri-County Softball League rules apply for playoffs, using international tiebreaker if necessary. No game shall end in a tie.
- Each team is to bring one ball to all rounds of playoffs. Playoffs are one game elimination. Each team will pay one umpire.
- Legal substitutions only as per USA SOFTBALL and Tri-County Softball League Rules.
- All players in the playoffs must be on the roster with that team from the beginning of the season
- All players must have played for their team at least 50% of games in the season.
- If unable to field a team from your rostered players due to player unavailability, it is permitted to pull up 3 players from a younger division. These players must not play in place of or in front of

normally rostered players. Rostered players must play the entire game unless injured or otherwise unable; pullup players can only be used as substitutes.

COACH/VOLUNTEER IN-GAME CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

- Coaches should provide a safe and supportive environment, take responsibility for their team's conduct, observe the official and local rules, defer to the umpires, and demonstrate a positive attitude when on the field.
- To promote good sportsmanship and fair play, the umpire, as the neutral game official, is the primary point of escalation regarding any disputes between coaches. At no time should coaches be directly arguing a call or game situation without an umpire involved in the conversation.
- All on-field disagreements discussed between head coaches and the umpire should be done out of earshot of players, parents, and spectators.
- If an official fails to hear the remark or see the incident and it is reported to them by a player or coach, the umpire must suspend play, approach the potentially offending team's head coach, and report to that coach what they were told.
- From the time the umpire's meeting takes place to begin the game, and until the umpire leaves the field at the conclusion, coaches or other game participants can only be ejected by the umpire.
- If a coach is ejected from a game, they should leave the field area, not be seen or heard from for the remainder of the game, and only return after the game to safely retrieve their child/player. No further discussion should be sought out with umpires or opposing coaches after the game.
- All umpire decisions are final.
- Any post-game appeal or disagreement with umpire decisions should be filed in writing with an association's director and submitted to the TCSL board of directors for review.