

2026 Minors Division Softball Rules

These rules will govern the Minors Division for the 2026 season. They reflect mainstream practices used by successful Little League programs and align with official Little League regulations while keeping our league's developmental philosophy at the forefront.

Game Operations & Equipment

- **Game Balls:** Both teams supply one (1) new Little League-approved softball at the plate meeting. The umpire will select the game ball; backups should be available.
- **Umpires:** If no district or assigned umpire is present, the Home team must provide an umpire.
- **Catcher Safety:** All catchers must wear a mask with a throat guard and cup for all warmups, innings, and bullpen activities. This includes hockey-style masks.
- **No Forfeits:** Borrow players when needed/able to ensure every game is played.
- **Weeknight / Lighting Adjustments:** Games shall not be scheduled for non-lighted fields after sunset.

Division and Game Format

- **Ages:** 8–12 (league age). Advanced 8-year-olds may play up with board approval. League age 12-year-olds may participate in the Minor Division under certain circumstances (safety or skill).
- **Field dimensions:** 60-foot bases; 35-foot pitching distance.
- **Games** will be a maximum of 6 innings, and no new inning may begin once 1 hour and 45 minutes have elapsed from the first pitch.
- **Continuous batting order** is required for all games.
- **A team** must field a minimum of eight (8) players to begin play. Borrow players from the opposing team if necessary to avoid cancellation.
- **No on-deck batters**

Pitching Rules

- **Players** pitch from a distance of 35 feet.
- **If a pitcher** hits three (3) batters in a game, regardless of the same or different innings, they must be removed from the mound for the remainder of the game.

- Pitchers must adhere to Little League Softball pitching regulations for delivery and re-entry.
- If a player pitcher issues four balls to a batter, a coach from the batting team completes that at-bat. Strikes for that count stay in play and the player pitcher leaves the mound for that batter only.
- There are no intentional walks. Coaches may visit the pitcher once per inning; on the second visit, the pitcher must be replaced.

Batting Rules

- Bunting is permitted; fake bunt followed by a swing is prohibited and results in a team warning, with a second occurrence resulting in the batter being called out.
- Dropped third strike is NOT in effect for Minors.
- Each player must wear an approved helmet while batting or on base.
- All bats must display the USA Softball certification stamp.
- Continuous batting order is used for all games.

Base Running Rules

- No leading off. Runners may not leave the base until the pitch crosses home plate.
- Stealing of second and third base is permitted after the pitch crosses home plate. Home plate may NOT be stolen until after May 15th.
- On infield overthrows that reach the outfield, runners may advance one base at their own risk. On all other overthrows, runners may not advance.
- Runners may only advance home on a batted ball or defensive play.
- A runner may only steal one (1) base per pitch, regardless of overthrows.
- No advancement on passed balls or wild pitches to home plate
- Sliding feet-first is required when advancing; head-first slides are permitted only when returning to a base.
- Play stops once the ball is returned to the pitcher and under control in the circle, per the circle rule.

Fielding and Defense

- Standard 10-player defensive alignment is used. Coaches are encouraged to rotate players through both infield and outfield positions regularly for development.

- Infield Fly Rule is not in effect at this level.
- Defensive coaches are not permitted on the field during live play.
- Outfielders must remain on the grass until the ball is put in play.

Scoring and Conduct

- Each half-inning ends after three (3) outs or five (5) runs, whichever occurs first.
- Scores and standings are recorded for regular-season play to determine playoff seeding.
- A 10-run rule is in effect after four (4) complete innings. An 8-run rule is in effect after five (5) complete innings.
- Games should emphasize teaching, sportsmanship, and team development while maintaining competitive integrity.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior toward umpires, players, or coaches will not be tolerated.

Rule Authority and Precedence

These local rules serve as operational guidance for the Parsippany Troy East Little League and are intended to complement the Official Little League Rules and Regulations. All games are governed first and foremost by the Official Little League Rulebook. If any discrepancy or conflict exists between these local rules and the Official Rulebook, the Official Little League Rules shall take precedence.