

JCYS Spring Rec Softball Rules

Last Update: 4/10/2026

1. GAMEDAY LOGISTICS – ALL DIVISIONS

Game Length – Majors and Intermediate games are 6 innings in length, but a new inning can't start after 1 hour, 40 minutes (most games end up being 4 or 5 innings). A regular season game can end in a tie, but both coaches can agree to play on if it's the last game scheduled on the field for that specific day. Minors games are capped at 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Weather – Games can be played in the rain (unless fields are closed). If it begins raining mid-game, head coaches should agree on whether to continue or not. However, game must stop for lightning. Final score for any game ended early due to weather will be the score from the last completed inning.

Umpires – Head coaches should meet with the umpire/umpires at home plate prior to each game to briefly review/confirm rules. Each head coach should pay half of the umpire fee in cash prior to start of the game (cash will be provided to each head coach prior to the start of the season).

Game Balls – Each head coach supplies one game ball (they will be provided at the beginning of the season). Game balls will be returned to the coaches at the end of the game.

Game Rules – Please refer to the game rules specific to each division outlined below. Please note that these apply to regular season internal JCYS games. Rules can be modified if agreed upon with the opposing coach for external games against other towns. Adjustments will be made for playoff games to ensure they don't end in a tie (communicated at end of regular season).

2. PLAYER SAFETY

- Batters must wear a batting helmet with attached facemask.
- All infielders must wear a fielding mask.
- Catcher must wear full catcher's gear provided in team bag.
- One bat up at a time (the batter). No on-deck circle and players should not swing bats in the dugout.

- Check the bin pre-game to ensure there are available ice packs.
- Promptly report all safety incidents and injuries to JCYS Safety Coordinator, Rich Lepore at richard.lepore@gmail.com.

3. MINORS SOFTBALL

Teams will ideally have 9-10 players. No problem if the full team can't make a game. Some of the best games are played with six players, since the ball is rarely hit to the outfield at this level. Fewer players per team keeps everyone in key positions throughout the game, and they remain interested and developing. Coaches can assign their batting order and fielding positions to be competitive, but no player should sit at any point of the game. All players must bat (in set order) and coaches should find opportunities to let players experience all positions at times throughout the season (be cognizant of game situations and find opportunities to switch things up).

First Four Weeks:

- 11" safety ball.
- Coach pitch (30' mound distance, but get closer as needed).
- Pitch until batter puts ball in play (no strikeouts).
- Bat through the entire order each inning, regardless of outs.
- Give players an opportunity to try each position.
- No umpires.

Next Five Weeks + External Games:

- 11" safety ball.
- Player pitch (30' mound distance).
- Coach steps in to pitch after 4 balls are thrown and inherits the count. No walks. Batter either puts the ball in play or strikes out.
- Maximum 2 innings per pitcher. Must be consecutive.
- Each half-inning ends when 3 outs are recorded or the offense reaches run cap (4 runs per half inning).
- No on-deck circle and no bats up in the dugout (for safety).
- Ball is live (meaning runner can advance) until it is returned to the infield.
- Allowed to advance one base on overthrow to any base.
- Leading is allowed once the pitch crosses home plate.
- No stealing allowed.
- One umpire behind home plate.

4. INTERMEDIATE SOFTBALL

Teams will ideally have 10-11 players. 10 players in the field at a time with 4 in the outfield. Coaches can assign their batting order and fielding positions to be competitive, but must bat the full roster (in set order) and no fielder should sit out multiple innings (and definitely not 2 innings in a row). Coaches should find opportunities to let players experience all positions at times throughout the season (be cognizant of game situations and find opportunities to switch things up).

If a coach knows in advance that their team will not have 8 or more players available, the coach can reach out to the other Intermediate division teams about guest players. If no guest players are available, the coach can “call up” players from the Minors division teams. This is a great opportunity for stronger Minors players to get some experience playing at a higher level. However, please note that guest players and “call-ups” should not bat ahead of roster players or take fielding opportunities from them.

Gameplay –

- 11” softball.
- 5 run cap per half-inning. All innings are capped, including the last inning.
- 1-2 umpires. Home plate and field (if there are 2).
- No dropped third strike.
- No infield fly rule.

Pitching –

- 35’ mound distance.
- Pitcher must start pitching motion with 1 foot on mound. Illegal pitch counts as ball.
- Maximum 3 innings per pitcher. Must be consecutive.
- Coach rescue after 4 walks in an inning (includes hit-by-pitch). Coach must pitch from the mound at 35’.

Defensive Alignment –

- Unlimited defensive substitutions. Any player can be moved into any position, with the exception of a pitcher returning to pitch after being taken out.
- Outfielders must start each play with feet positioned in the grass.

Batting –

- No on-deck circle and no bats up in the dugout (for safety).

- No slashing (when batter shows bunt, pulls back, then swings).

Baserunning –

- Ball is live until it is returned to the pitcher in the circle. If a runner is halfway between bases when pitcher receives ball in circle, she must either return or advance.
- Leading is allowed once the pitch crosses home plate.
- Stealing 2nd and 3rd base are allowed. No stealing home.
- Maximum one base per steal attempt. Player stealing base cannot advance for a second stolen base on an overthrow. We want the catchers to attempt to make the throw.
- Ball is live on transfer from catcher to pitcher after a pitch is thrown.

5. MAJORS SOFTBALL

Teams will ideally have 12-13 players, as many players have scheduling conflicts with Modified softball and other sports at this age. 9 players in the field at a time with 3 in the outfield. Coaches can assign their batting order and fielding positions to be competitive, but must bat the full roster (in set order) and no fielder should sit out multiple innings (and definitely not 2 innings in a row). Coaches should find opportunities to let players experience all positions at times throughout the season (be cognizant of game situations and find opportunities to switch things up).

If a coach knows in advance that their team will not have 9 players available, they can “call up” a player/players from the Intermediate division for the game. This is a great opportunity for stronger Intermediate players to get some experience playing at a higher level. However, please note that “call-ups” should not bat ahead of roster players or take fielding opportunities from them.

Gameplay –

- 12” softball.
- 1 patched umpire. 2 patched umpires for Championship.
- No run caps.
- No dropped third strike.
- No infield fly rule.

Pitching –

- 40’ mound distance.

- Pitcher must start pitching motion with 1 foot on mound. Illegal pitch counts as ball.
- Maximum 3 innings per pitcher. Must be consecutive.
- No coach rescue.

Defensive Alignment –

- Unlimited defensive substitutions. Any player can be moved into any position, with the exception of a pitcher returning to pitch after being taken out.
- Outfielders must start each play with feet positioned in the grass.

Batting –

- No on-deck circle and no bats up in the dugout (for safety).
- No slashing (when batter shows bunt, pulls back, then swings).

Baserunning –

- Ball is live until it is returned to the pitcher in the circle. If a runner is halfway between bases when pitcher receives ball in circle, she must either return or advance.
- Leading is allowed once the pitch crosses home plate.
- Stealing 2nd base, 3rd base, and Home are allowed.
- Ball is live on transfer from catcher to pitcher after a pitch is thrown.