

General Rules

M.U.D. County Youth Baseball & Softball League

Official Rules & League Handbook

Revised: March 2026

1. GOVERNING AUTHORITY

1.1 Rules of Play

1.1.a. All games shall be governed by **Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) rules**, except where modified by this League Handbook.

1.1.b. In the event of a conflict between OHSAA rules and League rules, **League rules shall prevail.**

2. PLAYER PARTICIPATION

2.1 Minimum Participation Requirement

2.1.a. Every player in attendance shall:

- Play a minimum of **two (2) continuous defensive innings**, and
- **Bat at least once** during the game.

2.1.b. The minimum participation requirement may be **waived due to injury.**

2.2 Batting Order

2.2.a. The **entire roster** shall comprise the batting order.

2.2.b. Batting order shall be established by the head coach prior to the game and followed for the duration of the game.

2.2.c. Teams with **eight (8) players** shall not record an out for the ninth batting position.

2.3 Disciplinary Restrictions

2.3.a. If a player is placed under disciplinary restriction:

- The umpire crew and opposing head coach must be notified **prior to game start.**

2.3.b. All disciplinary actions must align with league and organizational policies.

2.4 Travel Ball Participation

2.4.a. Travel ball players are permitted to participate.

2.4.b. Travel players may **not play down** from their designated travel level, regardless of age eligibility.

Example: A 9U travel player may not participate in 8U recreational play.

2.4.c. Travel players, within an organization, must be evenly distributed across the teams in their age division.

3. INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF PLAYERS

3.1 Minimum Players

3.1.a. A team may start and continue play with **eight (8) players** without penalty.

3.1.b. If a team has **seven (7) or fewer players** at game start or during play, the team shall be allowed **fifteen (15) minutes** to secure eligible pick-up players.

3.1.c. Failure to do so shall result in an **automatic forfeit**.

3.2 Injuries During Play

3.2.a. If a base runner is injured and unable to continue:

3.2.b. The player who recorded the **last offensive out** shall serve as a pinch runner.

3.2.c. Teams may complete a game with **seven (7) players** due to injury when no eligible pick-up players are available.

3.2.d. No out shall be charged if the injured player's batting position occurs.

3.3 Pick-Up Players

3.3.a. Pick-up players are permitted during regular season and tournament play provided all conditions are met.

3.3.b. The opposing head coach and umpire crew must be notified **prior to**

game start.

3.3.c. Pick-up players:

- May play any defensive position, other than pitcher.
- May bat in any position in the lineup

3.3.d. Pick-up players must:

- Be current members in good standing of the same league
- Come from the **next lower division**, with the exception of 8U SOFTBALL. **8U SOFTBALL only** may borrow from another 8U team within the organization.

Example: 12U baseball may pick up from 10U baseball

3.3.e. Players who “play up” as permanent roster members in an older division are **ineligible** to serve as pick-up players in a lower division.

3.3.f. A maximum of **three (3) pick-up players** may be used per team and may not exceed a legal starting lineup.

3.3.g. Use of an ineligible player shall result in an **automatic forfeit**.

3.4 Late Arriving Players

3.4.a. Coaches are not required to play players arriving after completion of the **third inning**.

3.4.b. Late-arriving rostered players must replace pick-up players unless restricted by disciplinary action.

4. EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS

4.1 Footwear

4.1.a. Only **rubber cleats** are permitted.

4.2 Game Balls

4.2.a. The home team shall provide **one (1) new and one (1) good used leather game balls** at the start of each game.

4.2.b. Game balls shall be issued by the league at the beginning of the season.

4.3 Fielding Gloves

- 4.3.a. All players must wear a baseball glove.
- 4.3.b. First basemen may use a position-specific glove.
- 4.3.c. Catcher's gloves may only be used by the catcher.

4.4 Bats

4.4.1 Baseball Regulations

- 4.4.1.a. Bats may be wood, aluminum, or composite materials manufactured for baseball use.
- 4.4.1.b. Bat diameter shall not exceed $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches.
- 4.4.1.c. Bats must meet **USA Baseball** or **BBCOR** standards.



- 4.4.1.d. USSSA-certified bats are prohibited.



- 4.4.1.e. Any player entering the field with a non-compliant bat shall be **declared out immediately**.

4.4.2 Softball Regulations

- 4.4.2.a Bats may be alloy or composite materials manufactured for softball use.

- 4.4.2.b Bats must contain USSSA or USA Softball Stamps on the barrel.



4.5 Medical & Safety Equipment

4.5.a. All medical protective equipment must be disclosed to both head coaches and the umpire crew prior to game start.

4.5.b. Written medical clearance from a physician must be available upon request.

5. GAME ADMINISTRATION & OFFENSE

5.1 Umpires

5.1.a. Two (2) umpires shall be assigned to each game when available (one umpire for 8U).

5.1.b. Umpires must be at least 12 years old prior to the start of the season.

5.1.c. Umpires assigned to a game must be at least two school grades ahead of the age group they're umpiring.

5.2 Game Length

5.2.a. Regulation games consist of **six (6) innings** or **One hour and Forty-Five minutes (1:45)**.

5.2.b. A game that reaches the one hour and forty-five minute time limit will finish the current inning unless it meets the guidelines of Section 5.3.

5.2.c. Games become official after **three (3) innings**.

5.2.d. In the final **ten (10)** minutes, mound visits are prohibited except for pitcher changes.

5.2.e. During the regular season, if a game ends in a tie at the conclusion of regulation play, teams may play up to two (2) additional innings, utilizing the International Tie Breaker (ITB) rules, provided that sufficient time remains within the scheduled time limit and field availability allows. No new inning may begin once the official time limit has been reached. If the game remains tied after the completion of the two additional innings or time expires, the game will be recorded as a tie in the official standings.

5.2.f. International Tie Breaker

- The last batted out from the previous inning shall be placed on second base to start the inning.

5.3 Run Rules

5.3.a. A game shall end immediately when:

- A **13-run lead** exists after four (4) innings, or
- A **7-run lead** exists after five (5) innings

5.3.b. A maximum of **six (6) runs per inning** may be scored.

5.3.c. If the run rule is reached, both coaches may agree to continue play if time permits. However, the game will drop dead at one hour and forty-five (1:45) minutes.

5.3.c.1. Official score shall be reverted back to the score at the time the run rule was in effect.

Example: Home team leads 6-4 in the middle of the 5th inning. The home team scores five runs in the bottom of the 5th inning resulting in

a score of 11-4. Both teams may agree to play the 6th inning, but the official score of the game shall be 11-4.

5.3.c.2. 10U and 12U baseball must continue to monitor pitch counts

5.4 GameChanger

5.4.1. All teams shall create their team in GameChanger.

5.4.2. Once in Gamechanger, all teams shall join the applicable M.U.D. County league in GameChanger.

5.4.4. The Head Coach is responsible for ensuring the final score and pitch counts (Baseball only) are correct prior to finalizing the game event in GameChanger.

-Coaches are responsible for ensuring the final score and pitch counts are correct prior to finalizing the game

6. SAFETY & EQUIPMENT ABUSE

6.1 Equipment Abuse

6.1.a. Equipment abuse includes throwing or mishandling equipment, whether intentional or accidental.

6.1.b. Penalties:

- First offense: Team warning
- Second offense: Player declared out
- Third offense: Player ejection

6.1.c. Intentional bat throwing may result in immediate ejection at umpire discretion.

6.2 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

6.2.a. Any action intended to harm another player, coach, or spectator shall result in immediate removal.

6.2.b. The incident shall be reviewed for possible suspension.

6.3 Weather

6.3.1 In the event thunder is heard or lightning is seen, competition and/or practices shall be immediately suspended and all players, coaches, and families shall seek shelter. If **thirty (30)** consecutive minutes pass without additional thundering or lightning occurring then play may resume.

6.3.2. In the event of excessive heat, guidance from OHSAA will be followed using the **Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)** as determined by www.perryweather.com.

- Practices and games shall be suspended if WBGT is $\geq 89.8F$.

7. GENERAL BASEBALL & SOFTBALL RULES

7.1 Coaches & Dugout Conduct

7.1.a. Coaches must remain in the dugout unless serving as a base coach.

Example: Coaches may not stand or sit along the inside of the fence during play.

7.1.b. Coaches may not stand or sit along the inside of the fence.

7.1.c. Only the head coach may address umpires regarding rule clarification.

7.2 Suspended Games

7.2.a. Games suspended due to weather or darkness shall be official after:

- Three (3) innings, or
- Two and one-half (2.5) innings if the home team is leading

7.2.b. Makeup games shall resume from the point of suspension with adjusted time limits.

7.2.c. Rostered players, who were absent from the originally scheduled game, may be added to the end of the batting lineup.

8. TOURNAMENT RULES

8.1 Format

8.1.a. Tournament play shall be **single elimination**.

8.2 Eligibility

8.2.a. Players must participate in **at least sixty percent (60%)** of regular season games to be eligible. Extenuating circumstances, such as injuries, must be reviewed and approved by the home organization board.

8.3 Game Rules

8.3.a. No time limits apply to the championship game.

8.3.b. Games are six (6) innings unless ended by run rule.

8.3.c. Baseball pitch counts for 10U and 12U shall be recorded in **GameChanger** as outlined in Section 11.5 (10U) and 12.6 (12U).

8.4 Seeding Tiebreakers

8.4.a. Head-to-head record

8.4.a.1. If more than two teams are tied for a seed, the tie breaker will skip to 8.4.b. to determine the tie breaker for that seed.

8.4.b. Strength of schedule

8.4.b.1. To determine Strength of Schedule the W-L record of each team's opponents will be used to determine the overall win percentage of their opponents. The team whose opponents have the higher win percentage will be awarded the higher seed.

8.4.c. Coin flip

9. DISCIPLINE & GOVERNANCE

9.1 Disciplinary Review

9.1.a. All disciplinary matters shall be reviewed by the **League Joint Disciplinary Review Committee**.

Section 10: 8U Baseball

Section 10 – 8U Division Baseball Rules

10.1 Age Qualifications

10.1.a. The 8U Division is open to players who meet the **8U age eligibility requirements** as defined by their local participating organization.

10.1.b. Age eligibility shall be verified in accordance with league registration policies.

10.2 Field Dimensions

10.2.a. The pitching rubber shall be positioned **forty-six (46) feet** from the back point of home plate.

10.2.b. Basepaths shall be **sixty (60) feet** in length.

10.2.c. A halfway mark shall be clearly identified between:

- First base and second base
- Second base and third base
- Third base and home plate

10.2.d. The distance from home plate to second base shall be **eighty-five (85) feet**.

10.2.e. A clear visual line shall separate the infield from the outfield:

- On fields where grass begins **five (5) to ten (10) feet** behind the bases, the grass shall define the outfield.
 - On larger dirt infields, cones or a chalk line shall be **ten (10) feet** behind the basepath to clearly demarcate the outfield boundary.
-

10.3 Equipment Requirements

10.3.a. All batters shall wear **NOCSAE-approved batting helmets** equipped with a **NOCSAE-approved face guard**.

10.3.b. Chin straps are permitted but not required.

10.4 Defensive Alignment & Substitutions

10.4.a. Teams shall field **ten (10) defensive players**.

10.4.b. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Four (4) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

10.4.c. Two (2) defensive coaches are permitted to be positioned in the outfield during defensive play.

10.4.d. Open substitutions shall be permitted throughout the game.

10.4.e. The catcher position shall be considered an **infield position** for defensive alignment purposes.

10.4.f. Infield defensive players, excluding the pitcher and catcher, shall not position themselves more than **five (5) feet in front of the baseline** until the ball is hit.

10.4.g. Outfielders must be positioned at least **five (5) feet behind the designated outfield line** at the time of each pitch.

10.4.h. An outfielder must **throw the ball into the infield** in order for an out to be recorded on a tag play at a base.

10.4.i. The **Infield Fly Rule shall not be enforced** in the 8U Division.

10.5 Coach Pitching Rules

10.5.a. Coaches shall pitch in the 8U Division.

10.5.b. A pitching line shall be placed at **thirty-five (35) feet**, with the pitching plate located at **forty-six (46) feet**.

10.5.c. Coaches must pitch **overhand only** and must release the ball from **behind the 35-foot line**. The coach **may not** step over the 35-foot line prior to releasing the ball.

- First offense: Dead ball, no pitch; team warning (one per team per game)
- Second offense: Dead ball; strike called

10.5.d. Once the ball is put into play, the pitching coach must **exit the field of play immediately**.

- First offense: Dead ball, no pitch; team warning
- Second offense: Dead ball; strike called

10.5.e. The pitching coach may **not provide coaching or instruction** once the ball has been pitched, including after leaving the field.

- First offense: Warning
- Second offense: Coach removed from pitching duties for the remainder of the game

10.5.f. The defensive player assigned to the pitcher position shall:

- Be positioned even with the pitching rubber (46 feet) at the time of the pitch
- Wear a **protective face guard**

10.6 Batting Rules

10.6.a. Each batter shall receive a maximum of:

- **Seven (7) pitches**, or
- **Three (3) swings**, whichever occurs first

10.6.b. If the batter does not put the ball in play by the seventh pitch, the batter shall be recorded as **out**.

10.6.c. If the final pitch is fouled, the batter shall be awarded **one additional pitch**. An at bat may not end on a foul ball.

10.6.d. If a batter is struck by a coach-pitched ball, an **additional pitch** shall be awarded.

10.6.e. If a batted ball strikes the pitching coach:

- The ball shall be declared **dead**

- All runners shall return to their previous bases
 - The pitch shall not count against the batter
-

10.7 Catcher Equipment Requirements

10.7.a. Catchers are required to wear the following protective equipment:

- NOCSAE-approved helmet with face and throat protection
 - Chest protector
 - Shin guards
 - Gender-appropriate athletic supporter and protective cup
-

10.8 Base Running, Advancement & Sliding

10.8.a. The 8U Division is designated as an **instructional league**, emphasizing player development and proper fundamentals.

10.8.b. All fair batted balls shall be categorized as either:

- **Infield balls**, defined as balls remaining in the infield area regardless of who fields them
- **Outfield balls**, defined as balls reaching the outfield area regardless of who fields them

10.8.c. On outfield balls:

- Runners may advance freely
- Once the ball is controlled by an infielder within the infield, runners may only advance if they are **more than halfway** to the next base, as judged by the umpire

10.8.d. On infield batted balls:

- Runners may advance **one (1) base** with liability of being put out

10.8.e. Once the ball is controlled in the infield, runners **may not advance** on an overthrow.

10.9 Base Stealing & Lead-Offs

Note: The intention of the rules in this section are to encourage the defensive players to attempt the correct defensive play.

10.9.a. Runners must remain in contact with their base until the ball is hit.

10.9.b. There shall be **no leading off or stealing** in the 8U Division.

10.9.c. Penalties for leaving early:

- First offense: Team warning
- Subsequent offenses: Runner may be declared out at umpire discretion

10.10 Sliding & Collision Avoidance

10.10.a. **Head-first sliding is prohibited** when advancing to a base.

- Violation shall result in the runner being declared **out**.

10.10.b. Head-first sliding is permitted only when returning to a previously attained base.

10.10.c. Base runners must avoid interference with fielders attempting to field a ball or make a play.

- Offensive interference shall result in an out.

10.10.d. Any runner who fails to attempt a slide and collides with a fielder during an imminent play at second base, third base, or home plate shall be declared **out**.

10.11 Obstruction

10.11.a. Fielders shall not obstruct a runner unless actively fielding the ball or making a play.

10.11.b. Obstruction is defined as a fielder, without possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding, impeding a runner's progress.

10.11.c. In the event of obstruction, the runner shall be awarded the base to which they were advancing.

Section 11: 10U Baseball

SECTION 11 – 10U Division BASEBALL RULES

11.1 Age Qualifications

11.1.a. The 10U Division is open to players who qualify under the 10U age restriction as defined by their local organization.

11.2 Field Dimensions

11.2.a. Pitching rubber distance shall be **46 feet** from the back point of home plate.

11.2.b. Basepath distance shall be **60 feet**.

11.2.c. The distance from home plate to second base shall be **85 feet**.

11.3 Equipment Requirements

11.3.a. All batters must wear **NOCSAE-approved batting helmets**.

11.3.b. **NOCSAE-approved face masks or jaw guards shall be used.**

11.3.c. Helmet chin straps are **optional**.

11.4 Defensive Alignment

11.4.a. A maximum of **nine (9) defensive players** are permitted on the field.

11.4.b. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Three (3) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

11.4.c. Open defensive substitutions are permitted.

11.4.d. The defense has three (3) minutes to take the field upon the opposing team recording the third out in an inning.

11.4.d.i. Teams are encouraged to use their last batted out to courtesy run for their catcher when on base to allow adequate time to get their gear on and be ready for the following inning.

11.4.d.ii. At the umpire's discretion, if play is deemed to be excessively delayed, a team warning shall be issued.

11.4.d.iii. Additional violations in the game will result in the batter being awarded first base.

11.5 Pitching Rules

11.5.a. Elevated pitcher's mounds **shall not** be used in the 10U Division.

11.5.b. Pitching limits:

11.5.b.i. Maximum of **seventy-five (75) pitches** per game.

11.5.b.ii. A pitcher may complete an at-bat if the pitch limit is reached during the count.

11.5.c. Travel ball players are **not permitted** to pitch in the 10U Division.

11.5.d. USA Pitch Smart Guidelines shall apply.

11.5.d.i. Required rest periods must be observed. (See Fig. 1)

Figure 1

AGE	DAILY MAX (PITCHES IN GAME)	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+

11.5.d.ii. GameChanger shall be the official source for pitch count tracking.

11.5.e. Coach mound visits:

11.5.e.i. On the **second coach visit** to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed.

11.5.e.ii. A pitcher removed under this rule may not return to pitch for the remainder of the game.

11.5.e.iii. Injury-related visits do not count, provided no coaching or strategy is given. Additional players may not be brought to the mound to provide additional coaching or strategy.

11.5.e.iv. Crossing the baseline or changing pitchers from the dugout constitutes a mound visit.

11.5.f. A pitcher shall not return to the mound once they have been substituted out of the pitching position.

11.5.g. Hit batter limitations:

11.5.g.i. A pitcher hitting three (3) batters in a game, or two (2) batters in one inning, must be removed for the remainder of the game.

11.5.g.ii. Batters must make a reasonable attempt to avoid being hit.

11.5.g.iii. Failure to attempt avoidance results in a dead ball and no penalty to the pitcher.

11.5.h. Balks / Illegal Pitches:

11.5.h.i. Only obvious illegal pitches shall be called.

11.5.h.ii. After the second illegal pitch by the same pitcher, a ball shall be added to the count.

11.5.h.iii. Each subsequent illegal pitch results in an additional ball until a pitching change occurs.

11.5.i. Strike zone shall be defined as:

11.5.k.i. Horizontally: batter's box to batter's box

11.5.k.ii. Vertically: from the top of the kneecaps to the armpits

11.5.j. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect in 10U.

11.6 Walk Rule / Coach Pitch

11.6.a. Walks are permitted, subject to the restriction in 11.6.b.

11.6.b. If a pitcher walks three consecutive batters in the same inning, and then throws ball four to the fourth batter:

11.6.b.i. An offensive coach shall enter to pitch from the rubber using a normal pitching motion.

11.6.b.ii. The coach inherits the existing strike count.

11.6.b.iii. The batter receives up to three (3) pitches to put the ball in play. If the batter fouls off the third or any subsequent pitch, or if the batter is hit by the pitch, the batter receives another pitch.

11.6.c. Strike and out conditions under coach pitch:

11.6.c.i. Umpires continue calling strikes.

11.6.c.ii. A third strike (swinging or called) results in an out.

11.6.c.iii. Fouled third pitches extend the at-bat.

11.6.c.iv. If the coach hits the batter on the third pitch or later, it is ruled "no pitch."

11.6.d. A hit by pitch is not considered a walk. The batter is awarded first base.

11.6.e. While a coach is pitching:

11.6.e.i. Bunting and stealing are prohibited.

11.6.e.ii. No warm-up pitches are allowed.

11.6.e.iii. The coach must pitch from the rubber.

11.6.e.iv. The defensive pitcher must remain beside or behind the rubber until release.

11.6.e.v. If the coach is hit by or catches the ball, the result is a foul ball.

11.6.e.vi. Coaches may not instruct, cheer, or yell while on the field of play.

11.7 Catcher Equipment

11.7.a. Catchers must wear:

11.7.a.i. NOCSAE-approved helmet with face mask and throat protector

11.7.a.ii. Chest protector

11.7.a.iii. Shin guards

11.7.a.iv. Gender-appropriate athletic supporter and protective cup

11.7.a.v. Catcher's mitt designed specifically for the position

11.8 Base Running, Stealing, and Sliding

11.8.a. Headfirst sliding while advancing a base is prohibited and results in an out.

11.8.a.i. Headfirst slides are permitted only when returning to a previously occupied base.

11.8.b. Stealing rules:

11.8.b.i. Stealing is permitted; leading off is not.

11.8.b.ii. Runners may leave the base only after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

11.8.b.iii. Early departure results in a dead ball.

A. First offense: team warning

B. Second offense: runner is out

11.8.c. Runners may steal **one (1) base per attempt**.

11.8.c.i. Advancement on overthrows during a steal is not permitted.

11.8.c.ii. No stealing is allowed while a coach is pitching.

11.8.d. Only second base and third base may be stolen.

11.8.e. Stealing home is permitted, but only on passed balls and wild pitches.

11.8.f. Offensive interference:

11.8.f.i. Runners must avoid interfering with fielders making a play.

11.8.f.ii. Interference results in the runner being declared out.

11.8.g. Collisions:

11.8.g.i. Runners must attempt to slide when a play is imminent.

11.8.g.ii. Failure to slide resulting in contact will result in an out.

11.8.h. Defensive obstruction:

11.8.h.i. Fielders without the ball may not impede a runner.

11.8.h.ii. If obstruction occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base to which they were advancing.

Section 12: 12U Baseball

SECTION 12 – 12U Division BASEBALL RULES

12.1 Age Qualifications

12.1.a. The 12U Division is open to players who qualify under the 12U age restriction as defined by their local organization.

12.2 Field Dimensions

12.2.a. The pitching rubber shall be **50 feet** from the back point of home plate.

12.2.b. Basepath distance shall be **70 feet**.

12.2.c. The distance from home plate to second base shall be **99 feet**.

12.3 Equipment Requirements

12.3.a. All batters are required to wear a batting helmet while batting.

12.3.b. The use of a helmet chin strap is **optional**.

12.4 Defensive Alignment

12.4.a. A maximum of **nine (9) defensive players** are permitted on the field.

12.4.b. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Three (3) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

12.4.c. Open defensive substitutions are permitted.

12.4.d. The **infield fly rule is not in effect** in the 12U Division.

12.5 Offensive Rules

12.5.a. The **Dropped Third Strike Rule** is in effect.

12.5.b. On an uncaught third strike, the batter becomes a runner if:

12.5.b.i. First base is unoccupied, or

12.5.b.ii. There are two (2) outs, regardless of base occupancy.

12.5.c. In these situations, the batter is not automatically out and may attempt to reach first base.

12.5.d. The batter-runner must be tagged or thrown out to be declared out.

12.5.e. If first base is occupied with fewer than two (2) outs at the time of the third strike, the batter is out and does not become a runner.

12.6 Pitching Rules

12.6.a. An **elevated pitcher's mound is required** in the 12U Division.

12.6.b. Pitch count limits:

12.6.b.i. Pitchers are limited to a maximum of **eighty-five (85) pitches per game**.

12.6.b.ii. A pitcher may complete an at-bat if the pitch limit is reached during the count.

12.6.c. Travel ball pitchers are not permitted to pitch in the 12U Division.

12.6.d. USA Pitch Smart Guidelines shall apply.

12.6.d.i. Required rest periods in **Figure 1** must be observed.

Figure 1

AGE	DAILY MAX (PITCHES IN GAME)	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)					
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81-105	106+

12.6.d.ii. **GameChanger** shall serve as the official source for pitch count tracking.

12.6.e. Coach mound visits:

12.6.e.i. On the **second visit** to the mound by a coach in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed.

12.6.e.ii. Any pitcher removed under this rule may not return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

12.6.e.iii. Visits due to injury do not count as mound visits.

12.6.f. Crossing the baseline or changing pitchers from the dugout constitutes a mound visit.

12.6.g. Pitching innings must be consecutive.

12.6.g.i. Once a pitcher is removed from the pitching position, they may not return in a later inning.

12.6.h. Batters must make a reasonable effort to avoid being hit by a pitch.

12.6.h.i. Failure to do so results in a dead ball.

12.6.i. If a pitcher hits:

12.6.i.i. Three (3) batters in a game, or

12.6.i.ii. Two (2) batters in a single inning,
the pitcher must be removed for the remainder of the game.

12.6.j. A dead ball resulting from a batter's failure to attempt avoidance shall not count toward the pitcher's hit batter total.

12.6.k. Balks:

12.6.k.i. Only obvious balks shall be called.

12.6.k.ii. Each pitcher shall receive **two (2) warnings** before a balk penalty is enforced.

12.6.k.iii. Balk enforcement shall follow Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) rules.

12.7 Catcher Requirements

12.7.a. Catchers must wear the following protective equipment:

- 12.7.a.i. NOCSAE-approved helmet with face mask and throat protector
 - 12.7.a.ii. Chest protector
 - 12.7.a.iii. Shin guards
 - 12.7.a.iv. Gender-appropriate athletic supporter and protective cup
 - 12.7.a.v. Catcher's mitt designed specifically for the position
 - 12.7.b. Catchers must be at their position and ready to begin the inning within **three (3) minutes**.
 - 12.7.c. Failure to comply results in the opposing team placing the last batter out on first base as a runner.
 - 12.7.d. If the catcher was the final batter of the previous half-inning, an additional **one (1) minute** shall be granted.
-

12.8 Base Running, Stealing, and Sliding

- 12.8.a. Runners are permitted to **lead off and steal bases**.
- 12.8.b. If the catcher attempts to throw out a stealing runner, the ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk.
- 12.8.c. Pitcher pick-off attempts:
 - 12.8.c.i. If a pitcher throws to a base and the ball contacts the fielder, the ball remains live.
 - 12.8.c.ii. If the ball is completely missed by the fielder, the ball is dead and all runners are awarded one (1) base.
 - 12.8.c.iii. The intent of this rule is to develop proper pick-off technique.
- 12.8.d. Offensive interference:
 - 12.8.d.i. Base runners must avoid interfering with fielders making a play.
 - 12.8.d.ii. Interference includes any action that obstructs, impedes, or confuses a fielder.
- 12.8.e. Collisions:
 - 12.8.e.i. Runners approaching second, third, or home must attempt to slide when a play is imminent.
 - 12.8.e.ii. Failure to slide resulting in contact shall result in the runner being declared out.

12.8.f. Defensive obstruction:

12.8.f.i. Fielders may not impede a runner unless actively fielding the ball or making a play.

12.8.f.ii. If obstruction occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base they were attempting to reach.

Section 13: 8U Softball

Section 13 – 8U Softball Rules

13.1 Player Qualifications

13.1.a. Age shall be determined as of **August 31** of the previous year.

13.1.b. All athletes must be female.

13.1.c. Age eligibility shall be verified in accordance with league registration policies.

13.2 Field Dimensions

13.2.a. The pitching rubber shall be positioned **thirty-five (35) feet** from the back point of home plate.

13.2.b. A circle, **eight (8) feet** in radius, shall be marked from the center of the pitching rubber.

13.2.b. Basepaths shall be **sixty (60) feet** in length.

13.2.c. A halfway mark shall be clearly identified between:

- First base and second base
- Second base and third base
- Third base and home plate

13.2.d. A clear visual line shall separate the infield from the outfield:

- On fields where grass begins **five (5) to ten (10) feet** behind the bases, the grass shall define the outfield.
 - On larger dirt infields, cones or a chalk line shall be **ten (10) feet** behind the basepath to clearly demarcate the outfield boundary.
-

13.3 Equipment Requirements

13.3.a. All batters shall wear **NOCSAE-approved batting helmets** equipped with a **NOCSAE-approved face mask**.

13.3.b. Chin straps are permitted but not required.

13.4 Defensive Alignment & Substitutions

13.4.a. Players may be borrowed from other 8U teams in the organization, however, if borrowed from another 8U team, the borrowed player must bat last and play the outfield only. Any borrowed player from a league below, does not come with this restriction.

13.4.b. Teams shall field **ten (10) defensive players**.

13.4.c. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Four (4) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

13.4.d. Two (2) defensive coaches are permitted to be positioned in the outfield during defensive play.

13.4.e. Open substitutions shall be permitted throughout the game.

13.4.f. The catcher position shall be considered an **infield position** for defensive alignment purposes.

13.4.g. Infield defensive players, excluding the pitcher and catcher, shall not position themselves more than **five (5) feet in front of the baseline** until the ball is hit.

13.4.h. Outfielders must be positioned at least **five (5) feet behind the designated outfield line** at the time of each pitch.

13.4.i. An outfielder must **throw the ball into the infield** in order for an out to be recorded on a tag play at a base.

13.4.j. The **Infield Fly Rule shall not be enforced** in the 8U Division.

13.5 Coach Pitching Rules

13.5.a. Coaches shall pitch in the 8U Division.

13.5.b. A pitching rubber shall be placed at **thirty-five (35) feet**.

13.5.c. Coaches must pitch **underhand only** and must maintain at least one foot inside the pitching circle while pitching.

- First offense: Dead ball, no pitch; team warning (one per team per game)
- Second offense: Dead ball; strike called

13.5.d. Once the ball is put into play, the pitching coach must **exit the field of play immediately**.

- First offense: Dead ball, no pitch; team warning
- Second offense: Dead ball; strike called

13.5.e. The pitching coach may **not provide coaching or instruction** once the ball has been pitched, including after leaving the field.

- First offense: Warning
- Second offense: Coach removed from pitching duties for the remainder of the game

13.5.f. The defensive player assigned to the pitcher position shall:

- Be positioned inline with or behind the pitching rubber with at least one foot in the pitching circle during the pitch.
- Wear a **protective face guard**

13.6 Batting Rules

13.6.a. Each batter shall receive a maximum of:

- **Seven (7) pitches**, or
- **Three (3) swings**, whichever occurs first

13.6.b. If the batter does not put the ball in play by the seventh pitch, the batter shall be recorded as **out**.

13.6.c. If the final pitch is fouled, the batter shall be awarded **one additional pitch**. An at bat can not end on a foul ball.

13.6.d. If a batter is struck by a coach-pitched ball, an **additional pitch** shall be awarded.

13.6.e. If a batted ball strikes the pitching coach:

- The ball shall be declared **dead**
- All runners shall return to their previous bases
- The pitch shall not count against the batter

13.6.f. Bunting is prohibited in the 8U division.

13.7 Catcher Equipment Requirements

13.7.a. Catchers are required to wear the following protective equipment:

- NOCSAE-approved helmet with face and throat protection
 - Chest protector
 - Shin guards
 - Gender-appropriate athletic supporter and protective cup
-

13.8 Base Running, Advancement & Sliding

13.8.a. The 8U Division is designated as an **instructional league**, emphasizing player development and proper fundamentals.

13.8.b. All fair batted balls shall be categorized as either:

- **Infield balls**, defined as balls remaining in the infield area regardless of who fields them
- **Outfield balls**, defined as balls reaching the outfield area regardless of who fields them

13.8.c. On outfield balls:

- Runners may advance freely
- Once the ball is **controlled** by an infielder within the infield, runners may only advance if they are **more than halfway** to the next base, as judged by the umpire.

13.8.d. On infield batted balls:

- Runners may advance **one (1) base** with liability of being put out

13.8.e. Once the ball is controlled in the infield, runners **may not advance** on an overthrow.

13.9 Base Stealing & Lead-Offs

Note: The intention of the rules in this section are to encourage the defensive players to attempt the correct defensive play.

13.9.a. Stealing is prohibited in the 8U division

13.9.b. Runners must maintain contact with the base until the ball crosses home plate.

13.9.c. Penalties for leaving early or excessive leadoffs:

- First offense: Team warning
 - Subsequent offenses: Runner may be declared out at umpire discretion
-

13.10 Sliding & Collision Avoidance

13.10.a. Head-first sliding is prohibited when advancing to a base.

- Violation shall result in the runner being declared **out**.

13.10.b. Head-first sliding is permitted only when returning to a previously attained base.

13.10.c. Base runners must avoid interference with fielders attempting to field a ball or make a play.

- Offensive interference shall result in an out.

13.10.d. Any runner who fails to attempt a slide and collides with a fielder during an imminent play at second base, third base, or home plate shall be declared **out**.

13.11 Obstruction

13.11.a. Fielders shall not obstruct a runner unless being the first defender actively fielding the ball.

13.11.b. Obstruction is defined as a fielder, without possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding, impeding a runner's progress.

13.11.c. In the event of obstruction, the runner shall be awarded the base to which they were advancing.

13.12. Sportsmanship & Conduct

13.12.a Respect for umpires is mandatory

- Arguing = zero tolerance
- Umpire may eject any violator

Section 14: 10U Softball

Section 14 – 10U Softball Rules

14.1 Player Qualifications

14.1.a. Age shall be determined as of **August 31** of the previous year.

14.1.b. All athletes must be female.

14.1.c. Age eligibility shall be verified in accordance with league registration policies.

14.2 Playing Field

14.2.a Pitching rubber distance shall be **thirty-five (35) feet** from the back point of home plate to the middle of the pitching rubber.

14.2.b. Basepath shall be **sixty (60) feet**.

14.2.c. A circle, **eight (8) feet** in radius, shall be marked from the center of the pitching rubber.

14.3 Equipment

14.3.a All batters must wear **NOCSAE-approved batting helmets** with a **NOCSAE-approved facemask installed**.

14.3.b Softball: 11 in, yellow in color.

14.3.c Any player in the pitcher position shall wear an approved fielding mask.

14.4 Defensive Alignment

14.4.a. A maximum of **ten (10) defensive players** are permitted on the field.

14.4.b. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Four (4) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

14.4.c. Open defensive substitutions are permitted.

14.6 Pitching Rules

14.6.a Pitchers entering the game shall follow the following pitch limits in regards to warmups:

- 1st appearance: 5 pitches
- Re-entry: 3 pitches

14.6.b Hit batter rule:

- Pitcher hitting 2 batters in a row or 3 in an inning → removed for remainder of inning, may re-enter
- Pitcher hitting 4 batters in a game → removed from pitching position for remainder of game

14.6.c Pitcher maximum innings: 4 per game (free substitution)

- Any pitches thrown count as an inning
- **Travel pitchers**: max 2 innings per game per team.

14.6.d After a player pitches **four (4) balls** to a batter, a coach from the batting team, shall come in and assume the batters count. No more than **three (3) pitches** may be thrown by the coach (with exception for foul balls)

14.6.d.i. Bunting is **prohibited** while the coach is pitching.

14.6.d.ii. If a player fouls off the final pitch, they may be awarded an additional pitch. An at bat may not end on a foul ball.

14.6.d.iii. The player in the pitching position must be inline with the pitching rubber and maintain at least one foot inside the pitching circle while the coach is pitching.

14.6.d.iv. Coach pitching shall maintain contact with one foot on the pitching rubber and throw a **flat pitch** consistent with league pitch speed.

14.6.d.v. Once the ball is batted in play the coach must immediately exit the field to avoid disrupting the play. Failure to do so will result in obstruction and the baserunner shall be called out.

14.6.d.vi. If the coach is hit by a batted ball the ruling shall be dead ball, no pitch, and the coach shall pitch an additional pitch.

14.6.d.v. Coaching of baserunners is prohibited from the pitching circle.

14.7 Offensive Rules

14.7.a Batting:

14.7.a.i Batters must make a reasonable attempt to get out of the way of a pitched ball. In the judgement of the umpire a player fails to do so and is hit by the ball, the ball is dead, and the batter is not awarded first base. Instead, the pitch is ruled a strike if it was in the strikezone, and a ball if it was outside the strikezone. If the pitch was ball four, the batter will be awarded first base.

14.7.a.ii. Dropped 3rd strike rule does not apply in the 10U division

14.7.a.ii.(1) On a dropped 3rd strike call the ball remains live; baserunners may advance at own risk

14.7.b Stealing and lead-offs are permitted granted they are within the following guidelines:

14.7.b.i. Stealing is prohibited while a coach is pitching.

14.7.b.ii. The baserunner shall maintain contact with the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand.

14.7.b.iii. A baserunner may only steal one (1) base per pitch. No additional bases shall be awarded if the throwdown attempt results in an overthrow.

14.7.b.iv. A baserunner may not steal a base on a throwback from the catcher to the pitcher.

14.7.b.v. The pitcher does not have control of the ball within the pitching circle (Look-back Rule). Once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle, all baserunners must immediately

choose to either attempt to advance to the next base or retreat to the previous base. Failure to do so in the judgement of the umpire will result in the baserunner being declared out.

14.7.c Slug (fake) bunting, showing bunt and then pulling back and hitting the ball, is prohibited. Violation of this rule shall result in a dead-ball and the batter shall be called out. Baserunners may not advance bases.

14.7.d. Slap hitting and traditional bunting is permitted in the 10U division.

14.7.e. Runners may advance **one (1) base** at their own risk from an infielder overthrow per play (defined as starting when the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch and the defensive team returning the ball to the pitcher in the pitching circle).

14.7.f. Offensive interference:

14.7.f.i. Base runners must avoid interfering with fielders making a play.

14.7.f.ii. Interference includes any action that obstructs, impedes, or confuses a fielder.

14.7.g. Collisions:

14.7.g.i. Failure to slide resulting in contact at any base that isn't otherwise blocked by the fielder shall result in the runner being declared out.

14.7.h. Defensive obstruction:

14.7.h.i. Fielders may not impede a runner unless they are the first player actively fielding the ball or making a play.

14.7.h.ii. Fielder may not block any base including home plate forcing the runner to change direction, or slow in an attempt to reach the base safely without possession of the ball

14.7.h.iii. If obstruction occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base they were attempting to reach.

14.8 Defensive Rules

14.8.a Infield fly rule does **not** apply

14.8.b 4 outfielders in normal position (edge of grass or ~15 ft beyond base paths)

14.8.c Play stops for injured player; runner awarded next base at the umpire's discretion.

14.9 Obstruction

14.9.a. Fielders shall not obstruct a runner unless being the first defender actively fielding the ball.

14.9.b. Obstruction is defined as a fielder, without possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding, impeding a runner's progress.

14.9.c. In the event of obstruction, the runner shall be awarded the base to which they were advancing.

14.10 Sportsmanship & Conduct

14.10.a Respect for umpires is mandatory

- Arguing = zero tolerance
- Umpire may eject any violator

Section 15: 13U Softball

Section 15 – 13U Softball Rules

15.1 Player Qualifications

15.1.a. Age shall be determined as of **August 31** of the previous year.

15.1.b. All athletes must be female.

15.1.c. Age eligibility shall be verified in accordance with league registration policies.

15.2 Playing Field

15.2.a Pitching rubber distance shall be **Forty (40) feet** from the back point of home plate to the middle of the pitching rubber.

15.2.b. Basepath shall be **sixty (60) feet**.

15.2.c. A circle, **eight (8) feet** in radius, shall be marked from the center of

15.3 Equipment

15.3.a. All batters must wear **NOCSAE-approved batting helmets** with a **NOCSAE-approved facemask installed**.

15.3.b Softball: 12 in, yellow in color.

15.3.c Any player in the pitcher position shall wear an approved fielding mask.

15.4 Defensive Alignment

15.4.a. A maximum of **nine (9) defensive players** are permitted on the field.

15.4.b. Defensive positioning shall be as follows:

- Three (3) players in the outfield
- Four (4) players in the infield
- One (1) player positioned at the pitcher's mound
- One (1) player positioned as catcher

15.4.c. Open defensive substitutions are permitted.

15.5 Pitching

15.6.a Pitchers entering the game shall follow the following pitch limits in regards to warmups:

- 1st appearance: 5 pitches
- Re-entry: 3 pitches

15.6.b Hit batter rule:

- Pitcher hitting 2 batters in a row or 3 in an inning → removed for remainder of inning, may re-enter
- Pitcher hitting 4 batters in a game → removed from pitching position for remainder of game

15.6.c Pitcher maximum innings: 4 per game (free substitution)

- Any pitches thrown count as an inning
- **Travel pitchers:** max 2 innings per game per team.

15.6.d No infield warm-up after first inning

15.7 Offensive Rules

15.7.a Batting:

15.7.a.i Batters must make a reasonable attempt to get out of the way of a pitched ball. In the judgement of the umpire a player fails to do so and is hit by the ball, the ball is dead, and the batter is not awarded first base. Instead, the pitch is ruled a strike if it was in the strikezone, and a ball if it was outside the strikezone. If the pitch was ball four, the batter will be awarded first base.

15.7.a.ii. The **Dropped Third Strike Rule** is in effect.

15.7.a.iii. On an uncaught third strike, the batter becomes a runner if:

15.7.a.iii.(1). First base is unoccupied, or

15.7.a.iii.(2). There are two (2) outs, regardless of base occupancy.

15.7.a.iv. In these situations, the batter is not automatically out and may attempt to reach first base.

15.7.a.v. The batter-runner must be tagged or thrown out to be declared out.

15.7.a.vi. If first base is occupied with fewer than two (2) outs at the time of the third strike, the batter is out and does not become a runner.

15.8 Base Running, Stealing, Sliding

15.8.a. Stealing and lead-offs are permitted granted they are within the following guidelines:

15.8.a.i. The baserunner shall maintain contact with the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand.

15.8.a.ii. The pitcher does not have control of the ball within the pitching circle (Look-back Rule). Once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle, all baserunners must immediately choose to either attempt to advance to the next base or retreat to the previous base. Failure to do so in the judgement of the umpire will result in the baserunner being declared out.

15.8.b. Offensive interference:

15.8.b.i. Base runners must avoid interfering with fielders making a play.

15.8.b.ii. Interference includes any action that obstructs, impedes, or confuses a fielder.

15.8.c. Collisions:

15.8.b.i. Failure to slide resulting in contact at any base that isn't otherwise blocked by the fielder shall result in the runner being declared out.

15.8.d. Defensive obstruction:

15.8.d.i. Fielders may not impede a runner unless they are the first player actively fielding the ball.

15.8.d.ii. Fielder may not block any base including home plate forcing the runner to change direction, or slow in an attempt to reach the base safely without possession of the ball

15.8.d.iii. If obstruction occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base they were attempting to reach.

15.9 Sportsmanship & Conduct

15.9.a Respect for umpires is mandatory

- Arguing = zero tolerance
- Umpire may eject any violator