

2025 Inter-town Softball Rules

6th – 8th Grade

Cranford, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, Kenilworth, Springfield, Westfield

As a matter of policy, all participants shall abide by and adhere to the rules and regulations as prescribed by USA Softball. USA Softball regulations and rules shall be found in the published pamphlet, USA Softball Rules & Regulations ("Rulebook").

The Rulebook shall govern play organized by the League with the following exceptions, modifications or or clarifications.

Players:

1. Participants include the following:
 - a. Girls 6th – 8th grade, who meet 12 U and 14U age requirements
 - b. Any other participants require approval

Safety and Equipment:

2. A 12 inch ball will be used for each game.
3. Players must wear team uniforms for games. Altering the uniforms will NOT be tolerated.
4. Steel/metal cleats are not allowed.
5. Any player warming up a pitcher on or off the field or playing catcher during warm-ups shall wear a catcher's mask, or faceguard helmet.
6. No player will wear any jewelry, including watches, earrings or any chains.
7. A batter may swing their bat only while in the on-deck batting area or while they are at bat.
8. Only one batter is allowed in the on-deck batting area at any time.
9. Players who are in the dugout are to remain behind fences at all times and are not to stand in fence openings in order to watch the game.
10. Tossing or throwing of balls is not allowed in the dugout.
11. Helmets with face-guards must be worn by all batters and base-runners. Helmets are not to be removed until a player is off of the playing field.
12. Face masks for fielding are required to be worn by infielders. Face masks for fielding are highly recommended for outfielders, but it is up to the players discretion.
13. Chest/Heart guards while playing the infield or outfield are recommended.
14. When playing the position of catcher during a practice, warming up a pitcher, or game, the player must wear full body protection gear (catcher's helmet with faceguard, chest protector and shin-guards).

15. No fielder may play closer than 50 feet from home plate except for the pitcher.
16. Base coaches must be adult coaches.
17. No Bat Donuts are allowed.

Game Schedule/Length:

18. Senior League games will consist of **six** innings, unless called due to darkness, weather and subject to the rules below:
 - A. Official game: A game is considered official when the home team is ahead and three and one-half innings have been completed. When the visiting team is ahead, a game is considered official when four innings have been completed.
 - B. Time Limit: **A time limit is in effect: No new inning can begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes** from scheduled game time or when the umpire is ready to play. Example: If a game begins at 8:00 PM and the bottom of the fifth inning completes after 9:45 PM, the sixth inning cannot begin. If the inning begins, that inning is played until completion (unless the home team is winning after the visiting team completes its turn at bat).
 - C. Start time: Will be the scheduled game time or when the umpire is ready to play.
 - D. Mercy Rule: 10 runs after 5 innings.

Game Rules:

19. A maximum of 10 players on defense (4 players in the outfield).
20. Every player present must participate in the field and must bat.
21. All players must play at least three innings on defense, and cannot sit for more than 1 consecutive inning (e.g., free substitution).
22. A minimum of either (8) players (from your team) are needed to play if you have 11 or more active players on your roster. If you only have 10 active players on your roster (e.g. you started the season with 11 players, and one broke a limb and is out), a minimum of seven (7) players is needed.
23. If the minimum number of players are not available within 15 minutes of the scheduled game start time, the game will be considered a forfeit (and be recorded as a 6-0 final score). The two teams are encouraged to play a scrimmage game in this scenario.
24. A player who arrives after the start of play is inserted at the end of the batting order. In the event a team begins play with eight (or fewer) players, a player arriving late can enter the game immediately.
25. If a rostered player leaves the game and will not return (e.g., leaves for another commitment), the team shall skip that player's turn at bat in the batting order and not be penalized.
26. Both teams shall maintain scorebooks for each game.

Pitching:

27. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.
28. The pitcher shall bring their hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.
29. The pitch must be completed with a single step toward the batter. The step must be with the non-pivot foot. A first step, breaking contact with the pitcher's plate, with the pivot foot followed by an additional step with the non-pivot foot is called a crow hop and is illegal.
30. A player may pitch unlimited innings in a game.
31. Throwing one pitch shall count as an inning for the purpose of determining how many innings a player has pitched.
32. Modified pitching and windmill are allowed.
33. This is a fast pitch league; therefore no arc pitching is permitted.
34. The umpire will determine if a pitch will be disallowed.
35. Pitching distance is 40 feet.
36. If a pitcher hits three batters in an inning, she must be removed from that position for the remainder of the game.
37. No intentional walking is allowed (e.g., rolling the ball, throwing ball high in the air).
38. There will only be five warm-up pitches for each pitcher between innings. A new pitcher may have 8 warm-up pitches.

Batting:

39. Each team bats the number of players playing that game.
40. In an inning, a team can bat a maximum of the number of players playing that game or the number of players the opposing team is playing that game (if one team has more players than the other team, the higher of the number of players shall be used for both teams).
41. A maximum of **five** runs are allowed for one inning.
42. These rules/limitations do **NOT** apply to the last inning, for which there are no restrictions to the number of batters or the number of runs scored.
43. Bunting is allowed. Batters are not allowed to fake a bunt and then swing at a pitch.
44. Only one player at a time shall be allowed in the designated on deck area.
45. Dropped third strike rule is in effect in that the runner may run to first base if the base is unoccupied by a baserunner.

- 46. Infield fly rule is in effect
- 47. A catcher interference with the batter shall result in a warning from the umpire to the defensive Team Manager and the replaying of the pitch (unless it is to the batting team's advantage to allow the result of the play to stand). A second offense by the same catcher will result in a dead ball and the batter will be awarded first base.
- 48. If a player does not bat in their batting position, the player is considered an out unless the player is injured or needed to leave the game. The injured player may return to the original batting position.

Base Running:

- 49. Runners must avoid contact with a fielder making a play at a base. The judgment call as to whether or not a player should have slid will be decided by the Umpire and is final.
- 50. No headfirst slides (no warning, runner will be called out). However, when the player is returning to a base, the player may dive back headfirst.
- 51. Sliding into first base is not allowed.
- 52. If the ball is in play, runners may advance
- 53. Runners may advance at their own risk only after the pitcher has released the ball. If less than two outs, if a play is made at a base other than home, run counts if the runner on 3rd base crosses home plate. If a runner was on 1st or 2nd base and is more than halfway to home plate (in the Umpire's discretion) before the ball goes back to the pitcher's circle, that run shall count also.
- 54. Decoy tags for the purpose of delaying a base runner are not allowed. A second offense shall result in the ejection from the game of the offending player.
- 55. To expedite play, with two outs, a courtesy runner for the catcher or pitcher shall be permitted; said runner shall be the player who made the last out.
- 56. Stealing is allowed.

Coaches on the Field:

- 57. A coach shall be allowed to request time and visit the mound. A second trip by a coach to the mound in an inning shall require a pitching change.
- 58. Base coaches must be adult coaches.
- 59. Coaches are not permitted to stand on field at any time unless coaching a base.

Conduct of Code:

- 60. Senior softball will use USA Umpires.
- 61. A judgment call (fair, foul, safe, out, strike or ball) by an umpire is final. Coaches may not challenge judgment calls.

62. Interpretations of rules may be appealed. The coach challenging an interpretation must be in possession of an Official Rule Book and cite the correct interpretation. Rule interpretation is final by the Umpire.
63. Unsportsmanlike language and/or behavior by players, coaches or spectators shall not be allowed. After one warning to the coach of the offending team, the umpire shall disqualify the player, manager or coach from the game, or in the case of a spectator, shall require that the spectator leave the game area.

Stoppage of play:

64. In the event of an injury, the play immediately stops. The play stands. The umpire may stop play in order for the player to receive attention.
65. In the event of an injury resulting in a stoppage or play, the player must leave the playing field, but may return.

Changes, modifications, alterations:

66. There shall be no changes, modifications or alterations of these aforementioned rules unless agreed upon by the majority vote of participating towns.