



## **Hendricks County Girls Softball League**

### **Division Rules - 8U (2026)**

(rev. 3-01-26)

The following rules have been approved by all participating league coordinators and should be observed at all parks participating in the Hendricks County Softball League. All Rules NOT LISTED will be governed by ASA/USA rules and regulations.

**ROSTERS:** Rosters should have no more than 13 players per team unless agreed upon otherwise by league coordinators.

#### **LEAGUE ELIGIBILITY:**

***SPRING*** league eligibility is determined based on the player's age as of September 1, 2025

***FALL*** league eligibility is determined based on the player's age as of September 1, 2026

Note: If a player is discovered to be participating in an ineligible age division during the regular season, that player will be removed from the team. If a player is found to be playing in an ineligible age division during a tournament, the entire team will be disqualified from the remainder of the tournament.

**GAME SCHEDULE:** Teams will generally play two games each Saturday with rotating hosting locations each week. If the league has an odd number of teams, one team per week may only play one game.

You will be notified by your coach if a game has been cancelled due to inclement weather or some other unforeseen event. Park rules will be used to determine if a game needs to be interrupted mid-game due to inclement weather (including lightning).

If a scheduled game cannot be played, the league coordinator will try to reschedule the game. However, there is no guarantee that all cancelled games will be rescheduled.

#### **EQUIPMENT:**

- 11-inch optic yellow softball
- Glove designed to catch an 11" softball
- ASA/USA approved bat (T-Ball bats are also acceptable)
- Batting helmet with protective face mask - *Players will not be allowed to bat without a helmet WITH a face mask. All batters and base runners must wear their helmets until they leave the field.*
- Fielder's Masks (mandatory for ALL fielding positions in 8U)
- Heart Guard is MANDATORY for the Pitcher's Helper position. The organization will provide one heart guard for each team.
- Softball Cleats with plastic spikes (metal cleats are not allowed)
- All catchers must wear the required catchers gear. The organization provides a set of catchers gear for each team.

**GAME OVERVIEW:** A regulation game consists of:

- Six innings or 75 minutes (whichever occurs first) constitutes a game. No new inning should start after 70 minutes and the current inning should be completed when possible.
- An inning consists of three outs
- Only pitches swung at by the batter will be called a strike; there are no "balls" in this league
- Each batter will receive a maximum of five pitches or three strikes, whichever comes first. The fifth pitch is considered the final pitch unless it is fouled off, in which case the batter will continue to bat until she either doesn't swing or accumulates a third strike.
- If the batter foul tips the 3rd strike and the catcher catches the ball (in flight), the batter shall be out. Any other foul ball must go over the batter's head for the catch to be counted as an out. In either scenario, the ball cannot bounce off the ground or fence to be an out.
- No intentional bunting or slapping at the ball.
- "Time" may be called by the player or umpire, however, the fielder must have possession of the ball (inside the baseline) and should be in front of the "LEAD RUNNER". When the umpire officially calls time, base runners must be past the halfway point to proceed to the next base or else they will be instructed to return to their previous base.
- A game should be started with at least eight players unless agreed upon otherwise by both coaches. Late players may be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. If eight players (or less), the ninth (or preceding) positions in the batting order will NOT be considered an automatic out.
- A game is considered complete if it cannot be continued due to darkness or inclement weather.
- If a regular season game ends with a tie score, it will be recorded as a tie game. If a championship game ends with a tie score, the international tie breaker rule will apply and the new extra inning will start with no outs.

**GAME TIME LIMITS:** All regular season games shall be 75 minutes and finish the current inning. No new inning should start after 70 minutes. The last inning should be finished even if the time limit has expired (umpire's discretion). The game clock will begin as designated by the umpire. If a game starts late due to delays by one or both teams, an umpire or director may shorten the game's time limit to preserve the start time of the following game on that field.

Tournament championship games will not have a time limit. Six complete innings will be played to complete a championship game unless BOTH teams agree to play with a time limit. The mercy rule is still in effect for championship games.

**RUN LIMITS:**

- 6 run limit per inning/per team for the first three innings
- 10 run limit per inning/per team for innings four and five
- Unlimited runs during inning six

**RUN RULE / MERCY RULE:** A game is considered complete once one team has:

- 15 run lead after three innings (2 ½ if home team is ahead after top of the 3rd)
- 12 run lead after four innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead after top of the 4th)
- 8 run lead after five innings (4 ½ if home team is ahead after the top of the 5th)

Note: It is up to the coaches or scorekeepers to monitor for the run rule. If you believe your team has reached the run rule, call time, confirm with the other team's coach or scorekeeper, then inform the umpire.

**BATTING/BASE RUNNING:** All players must remain in the same batting order for the entire game (\*). Coaches shall exchange batting lineups prior to each game. Any player arriving late to a game may be added to the bottom of the lineup. There is no base stealing and runners shall not move off the base until the ball is hit by the bat. No throwing of bats (\*\*).

\* If a player bats out of order, the following rules apply:

- If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter shall take her place and assume the count of the incorrect batter.
- If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed their turn and before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter who should have batted is out - all runs scored are cancelled and base runners shall return to their original base.
- If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, all runs scored and all bases ran shall be declared legal. No one is called out, however those that missed their turn at bat will not bat until the next time their name appears in the line-up.

\*\* If a player throws a bat, their team will receive a warning after which any subsequent violation will be cause for the offending player to be called out (umpire's discretion). If the bat hits any person, the batter is automatically out without a warning.

**PITCHING:** 8U is "coach pitch". The coach pitcher must have at least one foot inside the pitching circle before the pitch is released. The pitching coach must leave the field once the ball is put into play. If the coach is struck with (or mistakenly catches) the ball, the play is ruled dead and the batter will return to bat. The previous pitch will not be counted against the batter's pitch count. The pitching coach cannot direct the batter/runner after the ball is hit.

**FIELDING:** Each team can field their entire roster during regular season games (i.e. – no players need to be benched).

- **INFELDERS:** Only six fielders allowed in the infield
- **OUTFIELDERS:** No limit to the number of outfielders in regular season games. Limit four outfielders in tournament games. Outfielders must be positioned with at least two feet in the grass prior to the ball being hit. Outfielders may move into the infield once the ball is hit.
- **PITCHER'S HELPER:** Pitcher's Helper can stand on either side of the pitcher, but must stand with at least one foot inside the pitching circle. Pitcher's Helper must wear a fielder's mask and heart guard at all times – NO EXCEPTIONS!

**\* TWO COACHES ARE ALLOWED IN THE OUTFIELD TO DIRECT PLAYERS**

**OVERTHROW RULE:** Any throw (including a “catchable” throw) to first base that is missed and goes past the first baseman will be considered an overthrow. All runners are allowed only one base per overthrow. The overthrow rule is in effect for first base only! This rule is to encourage defensive players to attempt to get an out at first base.

**INTERFERENCE:** If a play is being made at a base or in the baseline, the base runner should avoid unnecessary contact with the defensive player or the base runner may be called out for interference (subject to umpire discretion). Interference does not require direct contact between players.

**OBSTRUCTION:** Defensive players, who are not in possession of the ball or not in the process of fielding the ball, can not obstruct the runner’s ability to reach the next base. This includes catchers blocking home plate without the ball.

**INJURED PLAYER:** In case of injury or illness, a team can continue to finish a game with as few as eight (8) players. If injuries result in 7 players or less, game may continue if agreed upon by both coaches. The injured or ill player should be scratched from the lineup and will NOT be considered an automatic out in their team’s batting lineup.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** A courtesy runner will be allowed for a batter who is injured. A courtesy runner may also be used for the catcher (no injury required) if there are two outs. This allows the catcher time to “gear up” and be prepared for the next inning (helps speed up game). If catcher is already on base and the second out occurs, no courtesy runner is allowed. The courtesy runner will be the player who recorded the last out.

**SUBSTITUTE/EMERGENCY PLAYERS:** Emergency players or “subs” may only be utilized when nine or fewer players are available. A maximum of two emergency players may be used in any one game to field a total of no more than 10 players. Emergency players must bat last and play in the **outfield** only.

\* Emergency players during regular season may be from the same age group or younger. Emergency players for tournament games must be from a lower age group (6U). All emergency players must have participated in the league’s current season. Emergency players must be identified at the start of the game to the umpire and opposing coach.

**UMPIRES:** All regular season and regular tournament games will have one umpire. Final championship games will have two umpires.

**“WALK UP” MUSIC:** Walk up music or sound effects may only be played as the batter is walking up to the plate or after a play is over. Music should be stopped or “faded out” as the batter enters the batter’s box. Violations will result in a warning from the umpire. Any proceeding violations after the umpire warning will result in no walk up music or sound effects allowed by that team for the rest of the game. \*Some communities may not allow walkup music at all.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** Players and coaches should always conduct themselves with sportsmanlike behavior. If a player is ejected for any reason, their team will record an out in that lineup position for the rest of the game. Any player or coach ejected may not participate in the next game. Parent protests are not allowed. Disputes should be settled by the umpires and the coaches at the time of the call and should be handled in a sportsmanlike manner. If a spectator is ejected, the spectator must leave the playing area immediately.