



# WES-DEL YOUTH ATHLETIC BASEBALL RULES

## 12U Softball League

Board Approved: December 13, 2023 Last Modified: December 13, 2023

**1. LEAGUE OVERVIEW:** The 12U League is a competitive youth baseball league which are determined by player drafts. These rules are in place to ensure fair play and must not be manipulated by coaches. If there is any uncertainty about a rule interpretation, the league commissioner must be consulted for clarification. During games, umpires have the final authority on all rule interpretation decisions. This is a youth recreational league (no contracts, no pro scouts). Set a positive example because young players are watching.

**1.1. Schedule:** Teams play two weekday games per week, with makeups for rainouts (if schedule permits). 4 Pre-season practices are mandatory. Coaches may schedule one or more practice per week in-season through the league.

**1.2. Uniforms:** Players must wear the full team uniform: team shirt, team socks, and Softball pants. Shirts must be tucked in. In cold weather, additional layers are allowed. Players out of uniform may still play unless the League Commissioner rules otherwise. A pitcher may wear sunglasses unless deemed a distraction by the umpire, in which case they must be removed. White long sleeves on the throwing arm of the pitcher are not allowed. The umpire has full discretion to require the removal of any distracting attire.

### 1.3. Equipment

**1.3.1. Ball:** A standard 12" yellow softball will be used and provided by the league at equipment distribution. The home team supplies game balls.

**1.3.2. Bat:** Only USA and USSSA Certified Bats are permitted, with no restriction on barrel diameter. Wood bats are not allowed. Refer to <https://usabat.com> or <https://ussa.com/slowpitch/slowpitch-licensed-softball-bat-ball-manufacturers> for approved bats.

**1.3.3. Glove:** All defensive players must wear a **glove**. Players must provide their own gloves for practices and games. **Only** a Catcher or First Baseman is allowed to wear a mitt.

**1.3.4. Helmet:** The player will provide their own helmets.

**1.3.5. Spikes:** Metal spikes are **prohibited**.

## 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

**2.1. Coach's and Parent's Code:** Be a **positive role model**. Children learn more from your behavior than your words. Emphasize **enjoyment over pressure** in competition. Respect coaches, officials, and opponents. **Do not enter the field** unless requested by an official or coach. The use of **alcohol, tobacco, and profanity is strictly prohibited** on or around the field of play.

**2.2. Player's Code:** Play for the love of the game. Be **humble in victory, gracious in defeat**. Always **play fair** and **obey the rules**. Prioritize the team's success over individual goals. **Respect officials' decisions** (no unsportsmanlike conduct). Always conduct yourself with honor and dignity.



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### 3. Playing Field

**3.1. Field Dimensions and Locations:** This league will play at seventy (70) foot base paths.

**3.1.1. Mound to Home Plate Distance:** Must measure 40' from the back point of home plate to the front edge of the pitching mound rubber.

**3.1.2. Bases:** Base paths measure seventy (70) feet from the back point of home plate to the back corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

**3.2. Dugout Assignments:** The Home team will occupy the 3rd Base dugout, and the visiting team will occupy the 1st Base dugout. League schedule will identify home and visiting teams.

### 3.3. Field Maintenance

**3.3.1. Pre-Game:** The home team is responsible for field preparation this includes lining of field, setting mound distance, as well as setting bases.

**3.3.2. Post-Game:** Visiting team is responsible for raking the field after the last game of the day/evening unless the team is from out of town. In that case the home team will be responsible.

### 4. Rosters

**4.1. Official Team Roster:** Teams consist of no more than 12 players unless approved by the commissioner. Rosters are determined by a player draft; however, Commissioners may add or move players as needed.

**4.2. Forfeited Game:** A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field at least eight (8) players at the scheduled start time or within a 10-minute grace period. To avoid a forfeit, teams may use other players to play the game.

### 5. Game Overview

**5.1. Pre-Game Warm-up:** Teams should arrive at the field **(30) thirty minutes before the scheduled start time**. If there is enough time, the visiting team will have the field for the first 15 minutes, followed by the home team for the last 15 minutes before the game begins. **If there are fewer than 15 minutes remaining before game time, no infield warm-ups will be allowed.**

**5.2. Length:** The game lasts six innings or 90 minutes (**whichever comes first**). No new inning starts **after** the time limit. If time expires mid-inning, play continues until the completion of the current inning unless the home team is ahead while batting, in which case the game ends immediately.



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**5.3. Maximum Run Rule:** A team can score up to six (6) runs per inning with no exceptions

**5.3.1.** The game will end early if a team is ahead by 13 or more runs after four (4) innings or 7 or more runs after five (5) innings.

**5.4. Playing Short:** A team must field at least eight (8) players or would be in violation of §4.2. If a team does field the eight (8) player minimum, no out will be recorded for the ninth batter's spot in the batting line up.

**5.5. Drop Third Strike:** Not applicable in this league.

**5.6. Infield Fly Rule:** Not applicable in this league

**5.7. Umpire:** Umpires will be provided by the league. If an umpire does not show, it is the responsibility of the visitor team to secure a volunteer umpire for the game. Umpire should call balls and strikes from behind the pitching mound. All judgement calls by an umpire are considered final.

**5.8. Official Scoring Method:** The official scorebook and record for all League games shall be maintained exclusively through the designated GameChanger. No other manual paper scorebook or electronic application shall be considered the official record for standings, statistics, or pitcher eligibility.

**5.8.1. Official Scorekeeper:** The home team is the official scorekeeper. The scorekeeper of both teams shall consult each other at the conclusion of each half inning. Any discrepancies at the end of the half inning must be resolved at that time. Any disputes will be handled by the league commissioner.

**5.8.1.1.** The Official Scorer must use the GameChanger app to score the game live as it occurs, ensuring the accuracy of all pitches, plays, runs, and outs.

**5.8.1.2.** The Official Scorer must confirm both team lineups are accurately entered into GameChanger prior to the first pitch.

**5.8.2. Score and Pitch Count Finalization:** Immediately following the conclusion of the game, the Official Scorer must finalize the game in the GameChanger app (by selecting "Game Over" or its equivalent) to ensure the final score and official pitch counts are recorded and submitted to the League's central administration.

**5.8.2.1.** The Official Scorer is the final authority on all statistical and scoring judgments made during the course of the game, subject only to League review.

**5.8.3. Game Reporting:** Coaches **must** notify the commissioner if a game is canceled due to weather. **Within 24 hours** after the game ends, they must also report the final score (along with their team name and number), any other players used, pitchers and their pitch counts, and any other important game details to the league Commissioner.

**5.8.4. Protests:** This rule is not applicable to this league.



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### 5.9. Weather

**5.9.1. Lightning and Thunder:** If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the field **must be cleared immediately**. Players and fans must leave the field and return to their cars (dugouts are **not** allowed). The game is suspended for **30 minutes** from the last lightning strike or thunder. If play cannot resume **before the game's halfway time limit**, the game will be postponed or rescheduled. (See §5.2 and §5.11).

**5.9.1.1. NOTE:** The game clock does not stop during weather delays once the game has started.

**5.9.2. Rain:** If the field is deemed to be "playable", game play is allowed to continue. It is up to the discretion of **both coaches as well as League administrator** to determine how "playable" is defined.

**5.9.3. Suspended Game:** If a game is suspended due to weather or darkness, it will resume from the point of suspension and continue within the remaining time limit, if scheduling allows, unless a complete game (§5.11) has been reached.

**5.10. Ties:** If a game is tied when the time limit is reached, it ends in a tie. No extra time or rescheduling will be allowed. However, if six (6) innings are completed and time remains, extra innings can be played to determine a winner. In extra innings, the offensive team starts with one out and the last batted-out is placed on second base. §5.2 still applies for the time limit.

**5.11. Complete Game:** A complete game is defined as the **completion of 3 innings**, (3½ innings if the home team is leading at that point). If the 3 complete-inning mark is not reached, coaches shall notify the league commissioner so the game can be rescheduled. The game will resume at the point in which the game was suspended, with the remaining game time.

### 6. Batting

**6.1. Batting Order:** The batting order will remain consistent from inning to inning. Once a team's offensive inning has concluded, the next batter due up will lead off in their team's next offensive inning.

**6.2. Balls and Strikes:** Umpire will call all balls and strikes. Balls and strikes are **judgment calls** and are **not** to be argued.

**6.3. On Deck:** All players are to be in the dugout except for the batter and the on-deck hitter. The on-deck hitter must be wearing a helmet.

**6.4. Throwing-the-Bat:** Umpires will issue a **warning** to a batter on his first offense. The second offense, and any subsequent offense, by the **same batter** in a game will result in the batter being declared **"out"**.

**6.5. Bunting:** Bunting is allowed in this league except off of pitching machine.

**6.6. Coaches on Field:** While batting, the hitting team will be allowed no more than two (2) coaches on the field of play: 1B Coach and 3B Coach



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**6.7. Injuries and Early Departures:** If a player becomes injured (as ruled by the umpire) and is unable to continue playing, his spot in the batting order **shall be skipped** with **no automatic out recorded**. Once the injured player leaves the batting order, he may **not** reenter the game.

## 7. Fielding

**7.1. Fielding Positions:** Each team will use ten (10) defensive players consisting of one (1) pitcher, one (1) catcher, four (4) infielders (1B, 2B, SS, and 3B), and four (4) outfielders (LF, RCF, LCF and RF). All outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass, no closer than ten (10) feet to the infield dirt. At no time can an additional infielder be added to the defensive lineup.

**7.2. Shifts:** No fielding shifts are allowed in this league.

**7.3. Stopping the Runner:** If the defense forces a runner back to their previous base, the runner cannot advance until the next pitch is thrown. However, if the defense tries to throw the runner out while they are retreating, all runners are allowed to advance freely.

**7.4. Coaches on Field:** No coach is allowed on the field of play to provide instruction.

## 8. Baserunning

**8.1. Stealing:** Base runners may advance ("steal"), but only after the **ball fully crosses home plate**. In this division, a base runner may steal **any** base.

**8.2. Headfirst Slides:** Headfirst slides are **allowed** at any base. Coaches are responsible for teaching proper technique.

**8.3. Lead-offs/Leaving Base Early:** Lead-offs are **not allowed**. Runners must keep at least **one foot on the base** until the requirement of §8.1 is met. If a runner leaves early, the umpire will issue a **team warning**, and all runners must return to their original bases. On the **second and any further offenses**, any runner who left early will be **called out**, and the play will be ruled dead. If a runner leaves early on a hit, the play is also **dead**, the pitch does not count, and all runners return to their bases. If it is the team's **second offense**, the runner who left early is **out**, and the batter continues their at-bat with the same count as before the warning.

**8.4. Over Throws:** Runners can run an unlimited number of bases in the event of an overthrown ball. Play is not stopped until §6.3 **Stopping the Runner** has been achieved. **Exception:** Runners may **not** advance on an overthrow from the catcher back to the pitcher.

**8.5. Speed-up Rule:** If a player (who will be the catcher in the next defensive inning) is on base with **two (2) outs**, they may be replaced on base with a pinch runner. The pinch runner **must** be the last batted out.

**8.6. Defensive Obstruction:** If a batter-runner or base-runner is obstructed while within the base path, the obstructed base-runner will be deemed safe and the play is ruled dead. No further advancement of baserunners will be allowed.



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**8.7. Offensive Interference:** If a batter or runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, he shall be declared out.

**8.8. Slide Rule:** There is **NOT** an automatic slide rule at each base. Runners are to avoid any intentional and/or malicious contact with the defensive player, and are strongly encouraged to slide in the event of a play. Any runner **not avoiding intentional or malicious contact** will be **called out**.

## 9. Pitching

**9.1.** A pitcher may throw more than three (3) innings in a single game. One pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched. If a pitcher pitches more than 3 innings she must have at least one days rest.

**9.2. Breaking Pitches:** Breaking pitches are **not allowed** in this league.

**9.3. Warm-ups (between innings):** Warm-ups between innings are a maximum of five (5) pitches. There is no minimum. If a pitcher throws the maximum five (5) pitches to a coach, they do not get additional warm-up pitches to their catcher.

**9.4. Balks:** One warning per pitcher per game. Coach can make visit to explain. Second violation follows traditional balk rule of dead ball and an advance of one base.

**9.5. Intentional Walks:** This rule is **not** applicable to this league.

**9.6. Coach Trips to Mound:** A coach can visit the mound twice per game. On the third visit, the pitcher must be replaced. If both visits occur in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed immediately.

**9.7. Pitcher Re-entry:** Once a player is removed from the pitcher position and replaced by another player on the team, that player **cannot** re-enter into the pitcher position for the remainder of the game.

## 10. Tournament

**10.1. Seeding:** If the number of teams in the league are either eight (8) or sixteen (16) teams, a standard bracket will be utilized that results in highest versus lowest seed game. If the number of teams in the league are anything other than eight (8) or sixteen (16) teams, the regular season top place team(s) will get a bye until the amount of teams remaining can be bracketed for a championship game.

**10.2. Seeding Tiebreaker Scenarios:** If there is a tie for a regular season place standing tie breakers scenarios will be applied in the following order:

**10.2.1.** head-to-head game winner.

**10.2.2.** run differential.

**10.2.3.** fewest total number of runs allowed.



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**10.2.4.** highest total number of runs scored.

**10.2.5.** coin toss

**10.3.Adhere to Season Rules:** Regular season rules will apply for the tournament.

**10.4.Game Tie:** If a game is tied at the end of the time limit or at the conclusion of six (6) innings (whichever comes first), the game can enter extra innings to determine a winner.

**10.5.Championship Game:** There is no The Championship game will not have a time limit. This game will be a full six (6) inning game. If, at the conclusion of six (6) innings, the game is tied, teams should adhere to §10.4.