

12U Division Rules (Ages 11–12)

All rules and regulations for this league shall follow IHSA/NFHS rules except for the following additions and modifications.

THE PLAYERS

1. Playing Time

- All players must play at least 2 innings per game.

2. Continuous Batting Order

- A continuous batting order will be used; all players bat.
- Late Arrivals: Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Players Leaving Early: If a player leaves due to injury, illness, or family circumstances, her spot in the lineup will be skipped without penalty and will not be recorded as an out.
- Injured Batter: If a player is injured during an at-bat and cannot continue, it is not an out. The last recorded out may complete the at-bat.
- Ejected Player: If a player is ejected, her batting position becomes an automatic out for the remainder of the game. The player is not suspended from future games.

3. Minimum Players

- Teams may play with a minimum of 7 players.
- Teams failing to meet the minimum player requirement must forfeit the game.

4. Substitute Players

- Teams may borrow players from other 12U teams within the league to make a roster of 7. 12U substitutes must play OF and bat last.
- Any additional players (player #8 and on) must be recruited from any 10U team within the league. 10U substitutes may play any position, except pitch and must bat last.

THE GAME

1. Game Ball

- The primary game ball shall be one brand new 12in softball.
- A second game ball may be used if it is new or in very good condition.
- Recreational practice balls may not be used in games. Ball should have ASA or USSSA Stamp present.

2. Length of Game

- Games shall consist of 6 innings, or 1 hour and 45 minutes, whichever comes first. Any inning will be completed.
- Ties are permitted.
- Weather-Shortened Games: A game is considered official after:
 - 3 innings are completed or 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
 - If the umpire suspends the game due to weather or unsafe conditions before the inning is completed: Revert to the score from the previous completed inning.
- Home Team Leading After Time Limit or After Top of the 6th inning
 - If the top half of an inning concludes after the time limit and the home team is ahead, the bottom half will not be played.
 - If the time limit is reached during the bottom half of an inning while the home team is ahead, the current batter will complete the at-bat and the inning will end.
- If the home team is ahead after the top of the 6th inning, the bottom half of the inning will not be played.

- Extra Inning: If six innings are completed, the game is tied, and the time limit has not been reached: A 7th inning may be played.

3. Run Limit

- Maximum of 6 runs per inning for all innings except:
 - 6th inning and any extra innings: Unlimited runs.

4. Sportsmanship

- Team chants and comments must:
 - Be directed only toward teammates.
 - Be positive in nature.
 - No chanting during the opposing pitcher's windup.
- Music
 - Warm-up and walk-up music are permitted and welcome.
 - Music volume must allow players and coaches to communicate effectively.

5. Defensive Alignment

- Teams may field a maximum of 9 defensive players: 4 Infielders, 3 Outfielders, Pitcher, and Catcher.
- Outfielder Positioning: All outfielders must begin each pitch on the grass. Use judgement for larger dirt fields.

6. Bunting is permitted. The batter may not take a bunt stance, then pull back and take a full swing.

- If a batter attempts this, she will be called out.

7. Base Distance

- Bases shall be 60 feet apart.

8. Makeup Games

- Coaches should make every reasonable effort to reschedule cancelled games.

9. Umpires

- An umpire must officiate each game.
- Umpires must be patched.

PITCHING

1. Pitching Distance

- The front edge of the pitching rubber will be 40 feet from the back tip of home plate.

2. Pitching Limit

- A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 4 innings per game.
- One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

3. Warm-Up Pitches and IF/OF Warm-up

- New pitchers: 5 warm-up pitches
- Returning pitchers: 3 warm-up pitches
- Team infield/outfield warm-ups are only allowed before the first inning.

4. Illegal Pitches

- Illegal pitches will be called and ruled a ball- runners do not advance.

5. Coach Visits to Mound

- Per inning, during the 2nd coach visit to the mound, the pitcher must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the inning.
- Per game, during the 4th coach visit to the mound, the pitcher must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game.

6. Pitching Fundamentals

- Coaches are encouraged to teach:
 - Hands must be apart when stepping onto the pitching plate.
 - Once the hands come together, the pitching motion begins.
 - The pitcher may not separate and then reconnect her hands before delivering the pitch.

BASE RUNNING

1. Sliding

- Players should be taught to slide to avoid contact and ensure safety.
- Slide Rule (NFHS Rule 8-6): A runner is out if:
 - Article 13- She does not legally slide and causes illegal contact or interferes with the fielder making a play.
 - Article 14- She remains upright and maliciously crashes into a defensive player. Malicious contact overrides obstruction.

2. Leadoffs

- Runners may leave the base once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- Leaving early will result in a team warning or runner being called out.

3. Courtesy Runners

- A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time.
- The courtesy runner shall be the last recorded out.

SAFETY

1. Defensive Face Masks

- All defensive players must wear face masks.

2. Batting Helmets

- Helmets must include a full-face mask.

3. Catcher's Equipment

- Proper catcher's protective equipment is required.

4. Approved Bats

- Bats must display USSSA 1.20 thumbprint stamp, or USSSA 1.20 rating.

5. Cleats and Jewelry

- Metal cleats and jewelry are prohibited.
- Players will be given an opportunity to remove or replace improper equipment.

6. On-Deck Batter

- The on-deck hitter must remain at the batter's back.

7. Uniform Requirements

- Softball pants are required.
- Leggings or shorts may not be worn.

8. Dugout Safety

- Players must remain behind the fence while in the dugout.

COACHES

1. Ejection and/or Suspension

- Any coach ejected by an umpire will receive a one-game suspension.
- Coaching during a suspension will result in a team forfeit.

2. Multiple Ejections

- Any coach ejected from two games by an umpire, even across multiple seasons, will be:

- Removed for the remainder of the current season, and
- Prohibited from coaching in future seasons across all participating towns.

3. Responsibility for Conduct

- Coaches are responsible for addressing code-of-conduct violations involving coaches, players, spectators, and anyone associated with their team.

4. Interaction with umpires

- Only head coaches may approach and interact with umpires.