

PORTAGE JR MISS SOFTBALL – JUNIORS DIVISION

Ages 7–8 | Spring Season (Updated August 2025)

1. OFFICIAL RULES

- Official **NSA Fastpitch rules** apply
 - The exceptions listed below take priority
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2. EQUIPMENT

- League-approved **11” Optic Yellow softball** (synthetic or leather)
 - League-approved **fastpitch or T-ball bat**
 - **NOCSAE-approved batting helmet with face guard** (required)
 - **NOCSAE-approved catcher’s gear** (mask, chest protector, shin guards)
 - **Fielding masks required** for ALL defensive players (games & practices)
 - Uniform shirts must:
 - Match team color
 - Have a number
 - Be **tucked in when batting**
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3. MANAGERS & COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- Home and visiting teams must:
 - Clean dugouts and bleachers
 - Rake the field after games and practices
 - Failure may result in loss of practice time
 - Unsafe conditions:
 - Coaches may remove players **without penalty**
 - Must discuss with umpire first
 - Coaching eligibility:
 - Anyone removed from coaching may not coach any PJM team
 - Coaches charged with violent crimes or crimes involving children are **immediately suspended** until resolved
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4. GAME FORMAT

- Regulation game:
 - **6 innings OR 1 hour 30 minutes**, whichever comes first
 - Official game:
 - After **3 complete innings OR 60 minutes**
 - **No infield fly**
 - Mercy rule:
 - 12-run lead after 3 innings
 - 10-run lead after 4 innings
 - 8-run lead after 5 innings
 - Batting minimum:
 - All players will bat **at least once per game**
 - If time expires mid-inning, teams may finish the batters who have not batted
 - Tied games:
 - Regular season games end in a **tie**
 - Tournament games use international tie-breaker
 - Team size:
 - Start with **10 players** when available
 - Minimum **8 players** required can end with 7
 - Start time:
 - Teams have **10 minutes** to field 8 players before a forfeit
 - Scorekeeping:
 - Home team must keep an **accurate scorebook**
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5. PITCHING

- Pitching motion:
 - Legal NSA/USSSA pitching rules apply
- Illegal pitch:
 - 1st offense: warning
 - 2nd offense: pitcher removed for remainder of inning
 - Pitcher may return next inning
- Coach pitch rules:
 - Manager or coach **must coach pitch** from the rubber
 - Same coach pitches the **entire inning**
 - Coach may only coach the batter (not runners)
 - Coach remains in pitching circle until play ends
 - Coach becomes part of the field (ball stays live if hit)

- Defensive pitcher positioning:
 - Player pitcher must stand left, right, or behind rubber inside circle
 - Catcher safety:
 - Catcher must wear **full gear** when warming up a pitcher
 - Pitching limits:
 - Maximum **2 consecutive innings**
 - Maximum **3 innings per game**
 - No pitching limits in tournament play
 - Hit batters:
 - Pitcher hitting **3 batters in one inning** must sit for remainder of inning
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6. BATTING RULES

- All players present bat the entire game
- Late arrivals bat **last** in the order
- Maximum **6 runs per inning**

Walks / Coach Pitch Transition

- No traditional base-on-balls
- At **4 balls**:
 - Batter keeps strike count
 - Coach pitches remaining strikes
 - Each coach pitch counts as a strike
 - Foul balls do **not** count as strike 3

Coach Pitch Restrictions

- Coach may **only coach the batter**
- Once batter becomes a runner, coach may not coach
- Coach must leave the field after play ends

Bunting

- **Allowed during player pitch only**
- **NOT allowed during coach pitch**

Safety Rules

- Bat throwing:
 - Only enforced if dangerous
 - 1st offense: warning
 - Additional offenses: batter is out
- Helmet rule:

- Helmets required outside dugout
- Continued unsafe violations may result in **manager ejection** (last resort)

Other Batting Rules

- **No drop 3rd strike**
 - **No infield fly rule**
 - Hit by pitch:
 - On the fly → batter awarded 1st base
 - After bounce → go to coach pitch
 - Injured batter may use courtesy runner (last out)
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7. BASE RUNNING

- Play stops when:
 - Defensive **infield player** has control of the ball in circle
- Until then, runners advance at their own risk
- Outs may be made at **any base**

Stealing & Leading Off

- Stealing and sliding are allowed with restrictions
 - **Stealing home is NOT allowed**
 - No stealing when team is up by **10 runs**
 - Runners may:
 - Lead off (including during coach pitch)
 - Restrictions:
 - No stealing during coach pitch
 - Leaving early and hesitation calls enforced
 - Advancing and touching next base = **automatic out**
 - If not touched, runner may return at own risk
 - Sliding:
 - Allowed and encouraged to avoid collisions
 - Flagrant collisions may result in **ejection**
 - Coaches must remain in the **coach's box** during play
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8. SUBSTITUTIONS

- Defensive rotation:
 - Bench players must enter defense **every other inning after the 1st**
 - All players must play **at least 1 inning in the infield**
 - Exception: borrowed players
- Substitute players:
 - From same or immediate lower division
 - Require **board and parent approval**
- Limits:
 - Maximum **4 substitutes**
 - Up to **10 players total**
- Substitute rules:
 - Bat **last** in the order
 - Play **outfield only**

Courtesy Runners

- Allowed for:
 - Pitcher, catcher, or injured player
 - Courtesy runner:
 - Last out recorded
 - Pitcher/catcher: next-to-last out
 - No outs: player farthest from current batter
 - Courtesy runner **strongly recommended** for catcher with 2 outs
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9. PLAYER REMOVAL

- Injury or illness:
 - Player skipped in batting order **with no penalty**
 - Leaving early (not injured/ill):
 - Team receives an **automatic out** when spot comes up
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REMINDER: This division bridges instructional play and competitive softball, with a strong focus on **safety, learning, and sportsmanship** 