PORTAGE JR MISS SOFTBALL – MINORS DIVISION

Ages 9–10 | Spring Season (Updated August 2025)

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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**
- 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 rule in Minors**
- Mercy rule:
    - 12-run lead after 3 innings
    - 10-run lead after 4 innings
    - 8-run lead after 5 innings
- Team size:
    - Start with **10 players** when available
    - Minimum **8 players** allowed (no automatic outs) can end with 7 players
- Lineup rules:
    - Up to **10 players** may start
    - **Maximum of 4 substitutes** (see Substitution section)
- Start time:
    - Teams have **10 minutes** to field at least 8 players before a forfeit
- Run rule restrictions:
    - When a team leads by **10 runs**:
        - No stealing
        - No drop 3rd strike
- Drop 3rd strike and stealing home are allowed otherwise
- Tied games:
    - Regular season games end in a **tie**
    - Tournament games use international tie-breaker
- Batting minimum:
    - All players will bat **at least once per game**
    - If time expires mid-inning, teams may finish the batting rotation

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5. PITCHING

- Legal pitching motions per **NSA/USSSA rules**
- Illegal pitch enforcement:
    - 1st offense: warning
    - 2nd offense: pitcher removed for remainder of inning
    - Pitcher may return next inning
- Catcher safety:
    - Catcher must wear **full gear** when warming up a pitcher
- Pitching limits:

    - Maximum **3 innings per pitcher** (regular season)
    - No pitching limits in tournament play
- Hit batters:
    - If a pitcher hits **3 batters in one inning**, she must sit for the rest of that inning

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6. BATTING RULES

- All players present bat the entire game
- Late arrivals bat **last** in the order
- Maximum **8 runs per inning**
- Hit by pitch:
    - Batter is awarded **1st base**
- **Bunting is allowed**
- **Drop 3rd strike is in effect**
- **No infield fly rule**

Bat Safety

- Bat must remain under control
    - 1st offense: warning to both teams
    - Additional offenses: batter is **out**

Helmet Rules

- Helmets must be worn outside the dugout
    - 1st offense: warning
    - Additional offenses: automatic out next at-bat
    - Exception: cannot be 3rd out; batter is skipped instead

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7. BASE RUNNING

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

Stealing & Leading Off

- Stealing and sliding are allowed
- Runners may:
    - Lead off
    - Steal bases and home

- Restrictions:
  - Umpires will call **leaving early or hesitation**
  - Only **one base per pitch** may be advanced
  - Advancing beyond one base and touching the next base = **automatic out**
  - If runner does not touch next base, she may return at her own risk
  - No stealing when team is up by **10 runs** and no drop 3rd strike
- Sliding at home plate is **strongly encouraged** when a play is being made

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8. SUBSTITUTIONS

- Substitute players:
  - Must be from the **same or immediate lower division**
  - Require **parent approval** and board notification
- Limits:
  - Maximum **4 substitutes**
  - Up to **10 players total**
- Substitute rules:
  - Bat **last** in the order
  - Play **outfield only**
- Tournament play:
  - A substitute may play for **only one team** until eliminated
- Defensive substitutions:
  - Bench players must rotate into defense **every other inning after the 1st**
  - Violations may result in manager ejection

Courtesy Runners

- Allowed for:
  - Pitcher, catcher, or injured player
- Courtesy runner:
  - Last out recorded
  - If pitcher or catcher: next-to-last out
  - If no outs: player farthest from current batter
- Courtesy runner is **strongly recommended** for catchers with 2 outs

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9. PLAYER REMOVAL

- Injury or illness:
  - Player is skipped in batting order **with no penalty**
- Leaving early (not injured/ill):

- Team receives an **automatic out** when player's spot comes up

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REMINDER: This division focuses on **skill development, safety, and sportsmanship**, while preparing players for competitive softball ⚾