



OWENSBORO CATHOLIC LEAGUE (OCL) RULES - 13U SOFTBALL 2026

Facility

- 1 Teams will have the following responsibilities:

ALL PRACTICES: Put away bases, put away all equipment, rake all holes and base areas, rake around the mound and home plate, pick up all trash from dugouts and bleachers.

HOME TEAM: Rake all holes and base areas, rake around the mound and home plate, tamp down dirt around the mound and home plate / batters boxes, turn out field lights, lock up all doors, pick up trash from your dugout and bleacher areas on your side of field.

VISITING TEAM: Put away bases, place scoreboard controls in concession stand, clean restrooms, pick up trash from your dugout and bleacher areas on your side of field.

**** DO NOT RAKE OR DRAG INFIELD DIRT INTO THE GRASS, AS THIS WILL BUILD UP A LIP ON THE DIRT/TURF EDGE AND CAUSE BAD BOUNCES**

Batting

- 1 All helmets used in games or practices shall utilize a full face mask. This rule applies to player furnished helmets and OCL furnished helmets. Any player running the bases and deliberately removes her helmet is out and all runners must return to their original bases.
- 2 Mandatory Playing Rules shall be enforced. Violations of this rule will be dealt with by the Owensboro Catholic League Board (OCL Board) and may include forfeiture of the game(s) in question.

Batting Order -

- (a) The batting order will include all players present and eligible, & this same order shall be used throughout the game, Round Robin.
 - (b) A player who has left early when their turn in the batting order comes will be deleted from the batting order, without penalty, as long as you still have 9 batters. If you drop to 8 batters, the 9th batting position will be an out unless this is due to illness or injury or it is the 3rd out of the inning.
 - (c) A player arriving late will be added at the end of the batting order, without penalty.
- 3 The infield fly rule is in effect.
 - 4 **On a 4 ball walk, runners are allowed to attempt to go to 2nd base if they choose to do so. It is a live ball and if they are tagged, they are out. If a hitter is hit by a pitch, it is a dead ball, no runners advance unless forced.**
 - 5 Bunting is allowed. If a player "shows" bunt and does not pull the bunt attempt back prior to the ball reaching the plate in the umpire's judgment, the pitch will be called a strike, regardless if the player makes an attempt on the ball or not. **There is no slashing, which is where a bunt attempt is shown and then pulled back with a swing. If you show bunt, you can make the attempt to bunt or pull back, but you may not swing.**
 - 6 Stealing is allowed.
 - 7 Runners are allowed to lead off with the release of the ball by the pitcher.

Leaving early (before pitcher releases the ball) will be penalized, runner will be called out.

Courtesy Runner: a) if the runner is injured or ill; b) if the runner is the defensive catcher. Last completed at bat will be replacement runner.



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- 8 Sliding is permitted, except for sliding headfirst. Penalty: Runner is out. Diving back to the base is not considered sliding head first. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to slide if there is a close play at all bases except first base.

** There is no "must slide" rule

The runner may slide, attempt to get around the fielder who is in possession of the ball and waiting to make the tag (if not, the fielder has obstructed the runner), or give him/herself up.

Hurdling or going over the defensive player that has the ball and is waiting to make a tag is a LEGAL maneuver.

If the runner attempts to get around and successfully avoids the tag without going out of the base line, that runner is safe. If the runner attempts to avoid, but still makes contact, the runner is NOT automatically out. What constitutes an attempt is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.

If the ball is on its way to the base or home plate, or the ball and runner get there simultaneously, and there is contact because the runner didn't slide or attempt to get around, this is just a collision, and collisions are part of baseball. Contact may occur with no penalty assessed.

- 9 Uncaught third strike will be in effect.

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by an umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out. To put the batter out, the defense must tag the batter or first base before the batter touches first base.

Base/Pitching Coaches

- 1 When a team is at bat, a first base coach, a third base coach, and one coach within a 4' radius at the end of the dugout is allowed to help the batter. All other coaches for the offense are to be in the dugout.
- 2 Base coaches must stay in coach's box. If he/she interferes (touches) a player, the runner is out.

Defense

- 1 Catchers must wear approved chest protector (long or short are both acceptable), catcher's style helmet/mask, and shin guards. Coaches will be responsible in seeing that the player have and use the required protective equipment.
- 2 Any defensive player is allowed to wear a heart guard or face guards, but they are not mandatory. Player-pitchers are recommended to wear a chest protector or heart guard, but they are not allowed to wear a catcher's-style chest protector. Coaches will be responsible for verifying that the players have and are wearing sufficient protective equipment and OCL reserves the right to change this rule at anytime to require the use of heart guards, chest protectors, or face guards for defined positions.
- 3 The distance from home plate to the pitching rubber shall be 40 feet and 12" high visibility softballs shall be utilized.
- 4 Except for injuries, player positions can only be changed one time per inning. Example: A first baseman may be moved to a regular outfield position any time during an inning, but must remain there until the inning is complete.
- 5 Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. Note: Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball. Example: A catcher on his/her knees blocking home plate before he/she has possession of the ball, prevents the sliding runner from touching home, makes the catch and applies the tag is obstructing the plate. In this example, the runner shall be called safe.



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If a player covering 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base is called for obstruction by the umpire, the runner will be awarded the next base if it is open and the umpire determines the runner could have advanced on the play. If the runner retreats back to a base after obstruction occurs, the umpire, at their discretion, will determine if the runner is allowed to advance or not.

(Example: If a runner is trying to round second and go to third and the 2nd baseman obstructs with the runner at second, the runner will get third base at the umpire's discretion). Only if the umpire determines that a player could not touch first base because of obstruction by the first baseman, will the runner going to first be called safe.

- 6 The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitching rubber. Because this is instructional, the pitcher does not have to keep one foot on the rubber once the ball is released (pitched).
- 7 Play is considered live and shall not be officially stopped until "time out" is called by an umpire. The umpire shall call time out in the following situations:
 - (a) When all runners have stopped on a base, or retreating to a base and the defense is no longer attempting to make a play on any runner.
 - (b) When requested by the defender in possession of the ball, after the lead runner has either stopped on a base or is retreating to a base.
 - (c) When requested by the defender in possession of the ball, who has positioned themselves in front of the lead runner, preventing the lead runner from advancing to the next base due to an obvious "tag out" situation. Any trailing runner may round a base and attempt to advance. If the trailing runner hesitates, they shall return to that base. If they continue to advance they shall be awarded the next base unless the defense tries to make a play on that runner. If so, the lead runner is free to advance.
 - (d) A player is hurt or injured. If the ball was in play at the time of the injury, base runners shall advance at the discretion of the umpires.

Note: All runners are free to advance as many bases as they can until the play has transpired and the umpire has called time. The defense can't call "time out" to stop runners from advancing.

- 8 **Protective face masks will be mandatory for softball pitchers, first basemen and third basemen**

Playing Requirements

- 1 Every player on a team roster will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs. If these playing requirements are not met -
 - (a) The player(s) involved shall start the next scheduled game, play any previous requirement not completed & the requirement for the current game before being removed.
 - (b) Those players not fulfilling their playing time because of a shortened game (Mercy Rule or time limit) will start the next game & play six (6) consecutive outs before they are removed from the game.
- 2 Each team shall field 10 players (6 infielders and 4 outfielders), but must field at least 8 players by game time plus 10 minutes or the game will be a forfeit. A team may field only 8 players to begin a game, however will take an automatic out at the 9th batter position unless it is the 3rd out of the inning (no out is given for 3rd out, position is skipped, no penalty). If the team drops to 8 players or fewer during the game (due to illness or injury) no out will be charged to the "empty" batting position(s). Any other reason and an out will be charged to the empty batting position(s) unless it is the 3rd out. There is never a penalty for the 10th batter position.



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If a coach knows that his / her team roster will drop to 8 or fewer for any given game, the coach has the option to pull up available player(s) from younger age divisions for the games in which his / her team will have 8 or fewer players. (When pulling up players, the coach is limited to a total of 9 roster positions for that particular game, including his / her full time players). If additional players show up for the game, they must be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.

A coach may not pull up younger players once a game has been started. The team will be required to play with the players that are present at the start of the game (or roster players that show up late) even if his or her team drops below 9 players due to illness or injury. 13U Girls Softball teams may utilize OCL assigned 10U players for the purpose of this rule.

Game Rules

- 1 Umpire will be furnished by OCL.
- 2 After a batter hits the ball, she must make an attempt to place the bat in the batter's box or lay the bat down. If a batter slings a bat, the umpire will issue a "team warning" for the first offense. The second time, the batter is out. If, in the umpire's judgment, the bat is slung dangerously the first time, no warning, the batter is out.
- 3 A ½ inning shall consist of 3 outs or 5 runs. Games will consist of 6 innings, but no inning shall be started after the time limits discussed below. (In case of a tie at the conclusion of the 6th inning, teams may play extra innings provided they do not exceed the times limits discussed below). The next inning begins immediately after the last out of the previous inning.

If at any time a team cannot score enough runs to catch the other team, due to the 5 runs per ½ inning rule, the game is officially over. (For the purposes of these rules, this shall be known as the Mercy Rule). If both coaches agree, the teams may play out the rest of the game, but any additional runs shall not be scored.

Any innings played beyond the 6th inning or beyond time limit (tournament only) shall be played under the "international tie breaker rule". (The last completed at bat on the roster of the previous inning shall occupy 2nd base before the start of any extra inning).

- 4 *Regular Season time limits will be adhered to as follows:*

There will be a 1:30 time limit on games.

The time limits starts at the time the first pitch is made in the game with the expectation that teams are warmed up, completed the pre-game prayer, and ready to go at the posted game time. The umpire has the authority to start the time limit prior to the first pitch if in his/her judgment teams did not meet this expectation.

When two games are played on the same field on the same night, the first game will start at 5:45pm and no inning of that game will start after the 1:30 time limit. Any inning started prior to the 1:30 time limit will be completed even though its completion may cause that game to run beyond 7:15pm.

ANY GAME CALLED DUE TO THE TIME LIMIT SHALL BE CONSIDERED A REGULATION GAME REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF INNINGS PLAYED.

ANY GAME IN WHICH THE SCORE IS TIED AND CALLED BECAUSE OF THE TIME LIMIT WILL END IN A TIE. (Each team will be credited with a 1/2 game win and a 1/2 game loss.)

Regarding TIE games. TIE games halted due to weather, curfew or light failure shall be resumed from the exact point at which they were halted in the original game.



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A game shall be considered a regulation game if at least 3 innings of the game are completed. If play is halted before the completion of the 4th, 5th or 6th inning, the final score will be defined as the score at the end of the last completed inning. (A completed inning will include any inning that the home team is at bat and the home team has more runs than the visiting team).

- 5 OFFICIAL GAME: Games called due to lightning or rain out (after the completion of at least 3 innings), revert back to the score at the conclusion of the previous completed inning (A completed inning will include any inning that the home team is at bat and the home team has more runs than the visiting team). If the game is suspended prior to completion (before 3 complete innings), the same runner(s) shall be put on base(s) and the same batter with the same batting order shall be used once the game resumes. This includes make-up date.
- 6 A runner will be called out if she runs more than 3 feet out of baseline to avoid a tag. This call will be made by the umpire. Only the coach in charge may appeal to the umpire for this call.
- 7 Any bat 2-1/4 inches in diameter is permitted, but only "USA Baseball" approved 2-5/8 inches in diameter bats are permitted. The umpire in charge shall make the final decision as to the acceptance of the bat for any given OCL game.

Field

- 1 The on-deck circle will be a 3' circle placed on the field in close proximity to each team's dugout, and the on-deck batter must wear a helmet. For safety reasons, teams may use either on-deck circle for the on-deck batter.
- 2 The distance from home plate to the pitching rubber shall be 40 feet. An 8' radius player-pitcher's circle shall be placed around the pitching rubber. First and Third Bases are 60' away from home plate.

Tournament

- 1 *Tournament time limits will be adhered to as follows:*
There will be a 1:30 time limit on all games except for the championship game(s) (no time limit). In championship games, all innings shall be played unless the game is called according to the Mercy Rule.
- 2 Tournament will be seeded based on overall record. First tiebreaker for tournament seeding is head-to-head record. Second tiebreaker is coin flip. The rules used for regular season will be used for tournament and except that games will not be allowed to end in a tie and will continue until a winning team is determined.
- 3 The higher seeded team is the home team throughout the tournament. Exception: The unbeaten team in the championship game of the winner's bracket shall be the home team regardless of seeding. If both teams have a loss going into the championship game, the home team will be determined by a coin toss under the direction of the umpire or an OCL league representative. Regarding TIE games, TIE games halted due to weather, curfew or light failure shall be resumed from the exact point at which they were halted in the original game.
- 4 Each player must play ½ the regular season games plus one game to be eligible for tournament play. To qualify as a "game played", the player must have met the requirements of the mandatory playing rules outlined above. Exception: This rule is subject to OCL Board review and reversal if the player's ineligibility is due to injury or illness and the player did not play in any other league or for a travel team.

Eligibility

- 1 Owensboro Catholic 13U Division is designed for girls ages 11, 12 and 13, but 10-year-old girls are eligible subject to OCL Board approval. The "playing age" of the child is determined by the child's age on December 31st of the year preceding the season.
- 2 Players turning 14 years old on or before December 31st of the previous year are not eligible to play 13U.



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- 3 A 13U player may not play simultaneously in another Owensboro Catholic League Division