



# Majors Division Rules

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## 1. Players

- Ten (10) players are to be fielded
- Game may be played with a minimum of seven (7) players.
- No player on the regular roster may sit for more than one (1) inning in a row – including extra innings - unless due to injury. If not, the game will be forfeited.

## 2. Equipment

- Face masks are REQUIRED to be worn by all infielders, including pitcher.
- Helmets must be worn by batter and base runners during games and practices
- Ball is to be 11” regulation softball supplied by the League.
- ONLY ASA APPROVED NON-COMPOSITE BATS ARE ALLOWED AT ANYTIME AT NSPL.
  - This includes games or practice.
  - Only single walled, one-piece construction bats are allowed to be used.
  - No composite bat of any type, no hybrid or half and half technology bat and no bat with fiber/composite reinforced core or handle is to be used.
  - If a batter enters the batter’s box with a composite/illegal bat, the batter will be out.
  - If a batter makes contact with a pitched ball using a composite/illegal bat, the batter is immediately called out and the runners are returned to their bases.

## 3. Field dimensions

- Base distance to be fifty-five (55) feet.
- Pitching distance to be thirty-five (35) feet (from point of plate to front of pitcher’s mound)

## 4. Game Length

- Starting time is 6:00pm (weeknights)
- Game will last no more than 6 innings, 5 ½ if the home team is ahead
- A new inning cannot be started 1 hour and 45 minutes after start time (weeknights)
- A new inning cannot be started 1 hour and 45 minutes after start time (weekend)
- Time limit still in effect even if there is no game after
- Mercy rule – Game will end if one team is ahead by 15 runs or more after 4 innings (3 ½ innings for the home team).
- Forfeit time is 6:15pm on weeknights or 15 minutes after the scheduled game time for weekend games. If both teams are not prepared to play – both forfeit
- If a new inning is started before the time limit, and in the middle the inning the game is called for darkness or weather the game will be considered complete and the score will revert back to end of the last full inning.
- All regular season games can end in a tie.

## 5. Ending an inning

- Inning ends once a team has scored five (5) runs or there are three (3) outs, whichever comes first
- In the final inning, the inning ends only after three outs – no run limit in final inning
- Final inning must be identified by coaches prior to the start of that inning
  - Once final inning is identified, the game is over after that inning – even if more time allows – unless additional inning is agreed to by BOTH coaches.

## 6. Defense

- Positions
    - 1 playing pitcher
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- 1 catcher
- 4 infielders (first, second, third base, short stop)
- 3 outfielders plus short fielder
  - outfielders and short fielders must play on the grass not in the infield
- Pitching
  - Coach pitching is NOT allowed.
  - Windmill pitching is allowed but not required.
  - Pitcher who has accumulated **nine (9) strikeouts** in the current game may NOT continue to pitch for the duration of that game. A strikeout on one batter registered by both pitchers goes to both pitchers.
  - Hit-by-pitch
    - Pitcher hits three (3) batters in the same inning, she may no longer pitch during that inning.
    - Same pitcher hits two (2) batters in any subsequent inning, then she may no longer pitch during that inning.
    - Same pitcher hits another (6th) batter, then she may no longer pitch in that game.
    - A ball which rolls on the ground into a batter is not considered ‘Hit-by-pitch’
      - Batter does not advance to 1<sup>st</sup> unless it was the 4<sup>th</sup> ball
      - Pitcher is not charged with a hit batter
  - Pitching rules
    - Pitcher *may* start with either two feet on or one foot on and one foot behind the pitching rubber with hands apart.
    - Hands must meet to begin motion.
    - One step forward with front foot is permitted.
    - A backward swing of the arm to begin motion is permitted but not required.
    - Only one full circle is permitted.
- A foul ball hit by the batter that goes higher than the batter’s head and is caught by the catcher will be an out.
- A fielder may not take a blocking position at any base (this includes the catcher at the plate) unless she is making a play on the runner. A player is considered making a play on the runner when the fielder has possession of the ball or is in the imminent process of receiving a ball thrown to the fielder to tag the runner or the base.

## 7. Base Running

- Leads are permitted *after* the ball crosses the plate.
  - Sliding is permitted, but not required
    - No headfirst slides
  - Stealing is NOT permitted
  - Dropped 3rd strike is NOT in effect
  - Infield fly rule is NOT in effect.
  - Tagging up on fly balls is allowed
  - Overthrows into the dead ball area—the runner is awarded two (2) bases from the *last occupied base* when the throw leaves the hand.
  - Hit to the Infield/Outfield
    - Runners may advance as many bases as possible until the ball is returned to the control of *any player* within pitcher’s circle and that player is not making an attempt on the runner
      - Some examples of a player NOT making an attempt include: holding ball down by their side or holding ball in their glove. These are gestures which stop play
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- A runner more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  way to the next base when the ball is received in the pitcher's circle may continue on to the base. Less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  way they are returned to prior base (Umpire discretion)
- Pinch runner
  - Catcher courtesy runner is permitted with two (2) outs.
  - Pinch runner must be next available player who made the last out.
  - No other pinch runners are allowed, except for injury

## 8. Batting

- Each team member will bat in order, using all team members in the lineup until end of inning
- Bunting is permitted – Fake bunts are **NOT** allowed
  - If a player shows bunt and then pulls back and swings away, it is a dead ball and the batter is out, regardless of whether or not contact was made with the pitched ball.
- Helmets must be worn by batter and base runners during games and practices.
- Throwing the bat is an automatic warning to both teams, regardless of offending player. Second offense is an automatic out to the offending team.
- Batting out of order
  - Defensive coach must bring it to the attention of the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter
  - Batter who batted out of order will be declared out and any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter will be nullified
  - Batting order can continue as normal starting with the batter who was skipped
- Strike zone will be widened and batters encouraged to swing

## 9. Double Base

- A batted ball hitting the white portion of a double base is fair. A batted ball hitting the colored portion of a double base is foul.
- Whenever a play is being made on batter-runner, the defense **MUST** use white portion and batter **MUST** use the colored portion. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield, when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or colored portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner must return to the white portion
- On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or colored portion. **NOTE:** This includes overthrows.
- When tagging up on a fly ball, the white portion must be used.

## 10. Players arriving late/leaving early

- Coaches, **before** the start of the game, must inform any opposing coach of any player(s) who are arriving late or leaving early
- Players arriving late must be placed at the bottom on the batting order
- If the player leaves, for any reason other than injury, without prior notification, it shall be declared an out when the player is scheduled to come up to bat.
- When using call-up, when/if a regular team player shows up, the Alternates player must still be permitted to play two (2) full innings or one (1) inning in the field and one (1) at bat.

## 11. Cancellations

- Assume game is “on” unless cancelled by the League on the League website.
  - Games will be made-up as soon as possible
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## 12. Incomplete Games

- Official game is 4 innings, 3 1/2 if home team is ahead
- If less than 1 COMPLETE inning is played, a full makeup game will be played.
- All other games that exceed 1 inning, but are not official, will be picked up where they left off.
  - Same score, outs, bases occupied, and pitch count.
  - If a player cannot make the rescheduled game, their place in the batting order is skipped during the continuation game
  - A player who is added to the make-up game is just added to the bottom of the batting order.

## 13. Standings

- Teams are awarded one (1) point for each win and one half (1/2) point for each tie
- When a tie exists in the standings, the following will be used to decide standings
  - First, head to head records of tied teams.
  - Second, lowest average per game of runs against
  - Third, coin flip or decided by division head
- For playoffs, the home team will always be the team listed higher in the standings (calculated at the end of the regular season) per the above criteria.

## 14. Miscellaneous

- Free substitution is permitted throughout the game.
  - Players must play in the division according to their age. Players will not be allowed to "play-down" in a lower division. Prior evaluation and board approval is required to "play-up".
  - Only those coaches/ volunteers who have submitted the required background checks and ACE certification and have been NSPL approved coaches/ are allowed on the field, in the batting cages, or in the dugout – this includes any games or practices.
  - Only registered players of NSPL are allowed to participate in the game, pre-game warm-ups or practices.
  - No smoking or other use of tobacco is permitted on the playing field side of the paved driveway that provides access to Troop Field.
  - No dog or pets of any kind (except service animals) are allowed on the field or in the areas surrounding the field – this includes any games or practices.
  - Official ASA/USA SOFTBALL rules, adjusted herein, will apply.
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