



# Juniors 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.
- No metal cleats
- Helmets must be worn by batter and base runners during games and practices
- Ball is to be 12” regulation softball supplied by the League.
- ONLY ASA/USA Softball APPROVED NON-COMPOSITE BATS ARE ALLOWED AT ANYTIME
  - 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 sixty (60) feet.
- Pitching distance to be forty (40) 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 7 innings, 6 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 2 hours 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 5 innings (4 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 just before the time limit, and in the middle of that 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
  - 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 two (2) batters in the same inning, she may no longer pitch during that inning.
    - Same pitcher hits one (1) batter in any subsequent inning, then she may no longer pitch during that inning.
    - Same pitcher hits another (4th) batter, then she may no longer pitch in that game.
  - NSPL follows USA Softball pitching rules
- 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 pitcher releases the ball.
- Sliding is permitted
  - A player must either slide or avoid contact with the defensive player on any play at home plate. Umpire discretion.
- Stealing is permitted
  - Unlimited steals per inning
  - One (1) steal home per inning is allowed
  - Delayed steals are NOT permitted
    - If a catcher throws to a base, this is not a delayed steal. (i.e. runner on third can steal home, provided there is a steal to home left, if the catcher chooses to throw to second base)
    - Advancing on an overthrow of a pitched ball being returned to the catcher is NOT allowed as this is a delayed steal.
  - Only one base per runner - no advances on an overthrow during a steal
  - If a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more they are not permitted to steal until the lead is nine (9) runs or less.
  - Continuation steals after a walk are not allowed
  - A runner who attempts to steal a base after the maximum number of steals has been reached is at risk of being tagged out by defense. Return to prior base is not guaranteed.
  - Umpires are NOT responsible for keeping track of number of steals. It must be kept by both teams.
- Dropped third strike is NOT in effect
- Infield fly rule IS in effect.
- Tagging up on fly balls is allowed



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- Overthrows into the dead ball area—the runner is awarded two (2) bases from the last occupied base when the throw leaves the hand.
- Runners may advance at will, until umpire calls the play over.
- Pinch runner
  - Catcher courtesy runner is permitted with two (2) outs.
    - 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

## 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
- Games cancelled without approval by umpire or Division Head will be a forfeit.



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## 12. Incomplete Games

- Official game is 5 innings, 4 ½ innings if home team 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.
- 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 (excluding service animals) are allowed on the field or in the areas surrounding the field – this includes any games or practices.
- Official USA SOFTBALL rules, adjusted herein, will apply.