

# MGS FAQ 2024

Frequently Asked Questions by Age Group (updated April 3, 2024)

## 15U, 12U & 10U

### **Question: Is cheering allowed while the pitcher is pitching?**

Answer: Positive cheering is always allowed, even when the pitcher is pitching. However, the umpire will not allow any cheer or behavior that is, in the umpire's judgment, intended to taunt, tease, humiliate, distract, annoy, or otherwise impair the performance of a member of the opposing team. The MGS local rules (Rule 10 Section 9A) explains in detail that cheering is allowed while the pitcher is pitching as long as it is "exclusively supportive of player performance".

### **Question: What is the official start time of a game?**

Answer: The game "start time" is defined as the end of the coach/umpire meeting at home plate. The umpire should (loudly) call out the game start time. To be clear, the start time is NOT when the home team takes the field, it is NOT at the first warm up pitch, it is NOT at the first pitch, game start time IS at the end of the coach/umpire meeting at home plate.

Note that as indicated in the local rules, all games will now have a visible timer to help alleviate any issues or disputes related to time. If a game does not have a visible clock mounted, please request one is used or report back to your district leadership so they can make sure they are provided for future games.

### **Question: What is the time limit for games?**

Answer: 90 minutes or 7 innings, whichever comes first. After game time expires, the current inning will be completed. The start of a new inning is determined by the 3rd out of the previous inning. If there is still time on the clock when the 3rd out occurs at the bottom of the inning, a new inning will be played.

### **Question: After regulation time are there extra innings if the game is tied?**

Answer: During the regular season, if the game is tied either after completion of regulation play or after 7 innings have been played, the rules call for 1 additional inning to be played. If the game is still tied at the end of the additional inning, the game will be scored as a tie.

### **Question: Do pitchers have pitching limits?**

Answer: During the regular season, pitchers will be limited to 4 innings per game in 12U & 15U and 3 innings in 10U. The pitching limit will be waived in the event that the game goes to an extra inning. During the playoffs, there is a 4 inning pitching limit for 10U, but none for 12U & 15U. There are no pitching limits in the championship game.

**Question: Are facemasks mandatory?**

Answer: Facemasks are mandatory for pitchers in all MGS events when pitching to a live batter (game or practice). They are not required during warm up pitches. The facemask must have a non-glare outer surface. During games, the umpire is responsible for enforcing this rule. Facemasks are strongly recommended for 1st and 3rd base position players but are not mandatory.

**Question: How many players are in the field on defense?**

Answer: For 15u, the defense consists of 9 players. For 10U and 12U, the defense is 10 players (4 of whom are outfielders). To be considered an outfielder, the players must be positioned at least 10 feet behind the baselines between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases before every pitch. Nothing in this rule prohibits an outfielder from covering a base, taking part in a rundown, fielding a hit ball, or otherwise making a play in the infield.

**Question: How many players are in the batting lineup?**

Answer: All players shall bat in the order, whether or not they are playing defense.

**Question: What happens if a player misses their at bat?**

Answer: During the regular season, if a player leaves early from a game or cannot bat, the player's spot in the batting order is skipped and is NOT recorded as an out. However, as stated in the MGS rules, any time you fall below the required minimum number of players for your division, the game is forfeited.

Please note, this rule differs from USA Softball Official Rules because our recreational leagues are required to have all players bat in the batting order, there are no substitutions available for batters.

During the playoffs, in case of an injury or any other reason that a player cannot complete their at bat NOT caused by a hit by pitch, **the batter is recorded as an out**. The player's coach must inform the ump as soon as it's known the player cannot bat, the umpire must inform the other team.

**Question: How many warm up pitches are allowed to a pitcher in between innings?**

Answer: Per USA Softball, a pitcher has 1 minute to deliver not more than five pitches at the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches (and will be counted as full inning pitched per rules).

**Question: When can we use courtesy base runners?**

Answer: Courtesy runners can be used for the pitcher or catcher only when there are two outs

**Question: Is there a dropped 3rd strike if first base is occupied and less than two outs?**

Answer: No, if first base is occupied and there are less than two outs, the batter will be called out regardless of if the 3rd strike was caught by the catcher or not (per USA Softball).

# 10U

## **Question: How does pitching work in 10U?**

Answer: 10u games no longer have a Walk Rule in place and an adult pitcher is no longer used. All pitches are to be thrown by rostered players. First base will be awarded to the batter after 4 balls or if they are hit by a pitch. They will no longer have the option to keep hitting and must take their base.

## **Question: What is the pitching distance in 10U?**

Answer: 35 feet from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. Pitchers and Adult Pitchers (AP) shall pitch from the rubber. If necessary, AP may start from a shorter distance to throw a pitch that can be hit. Both feet of the AP must remain inside the pitching circle throughout the pitch. Coaches are encouraged to throw a more level fast pitch rather than a high slow pitch type lob.

## **Question: Is there dropped 3rd strike in 10U?**

Answer: Yes, a batter may attempt to advance to first base when the catcher fails to catch the 3rd strike. Note, this doesn't apply when there is a runner on 1st base and less than 2 outs.

## **Question: How many bases can a player take on an overthrow?**

*The answer to this question is varied depending on what type of overthrow is in question.*

### **Overthrow on BATTED BALL:**

Answer: If the ball is put in play by the batter and an overthrow occurs in an attempt to get a runner out at a base or trying to get the ball back to the pitcher, the runners may continue to advance multiple bases until either the ball is declared "dead" or "out of play" by the umpire OR the ball is returned to and under control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.

### **Overthrow from a pitcher in the circle after the ball is "in control" of the pitcher:**

Answer: On a play involving a batted fair ball, as long as the ball remains in the control of the pitcher in the circle, a runner's advance is stopped. A runner between bases is entitled to advance to the next base only, but is at risk for being put out. The ball must be in the pitcher's glove or hand to be considered "in control". If a pitcher makes a throw from the circle in front of a runner trying to advance to a new base, before the ball has been called dead by the umpire, and throws the ball past the intended target, the runner is awarded the base they were running to but cannot advance any further. Any other runners can only advance one base. This advantage to the pitcher is the same as that given a catcher who is trying to throw a base runner out stealing.

### **Overthrow from catcher on a Steal Attempt or Dropped 3rd Strike:**

Answer: A base runner cannot advance further if the ball is thrown past the player covering the base on a steal attempt, although you can be tagged out for overrunning or sliding past 2nd or 3rd base. A base runner may not advance on an overthrown pickoff attempt by the catcher. No stealing is allowed during a change of pitcher.

### **Question: What are the stealing rules in 10U?**

Answer: One stolen base per runner per pitch. Each team will be allowed **unlimited** steal attempts per inning, including stealing home. Runners may leave the base as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand (per USA Softball). Runners on 3rd base may advance home at any point after the pitch is thrown and before the ball is returned to and under control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle. This applies to runners on 3rd base progressing on a throw to 2nd during a stealing attempt or a throw to 1st base on a dropped 3rd strike. That said, no runners may advance on a pickoff attempt.

### **Question: Are delayed steals allowed?**

Answer: Yes, delayed steals are allowed. With the introduction of stealing home, there was confusion around "a base runner may not advance on a pickoff attempt by the catcher." The purpose of this rule is to encourage the catcher to attempt to make the out without risk of additional bases being stolen due to errors. However, "stealing is one base per runner per pitch" and is allowed before the ball is declared "dead" or "out of play" by the umpire OR the ball is returned to and under control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle. Runners may steal any base on a catcher's throw, but they do so at their own risk of being tagged out. If the runner isn't stealing on the throw the umpire may deem it a pickoff attempt and send the runner back to the base if they are not put out.

### **Question: What is the rule on ALL players being in the infield by a certain inning?**

Answer: All players **MUST** play 1 full inning in the infield by the 3rd inning. One full inning is 3 consecutive outs in the infield in the same inning. The pitching rule of "one pitch in an inning equals a full inning pitched" **DOES NOT COUNT** as an inning played in the infield. The pitching rules are separate from an inning played in the infield. ***A proven violation of this rule will result in a forfeit.*** If you notice that a player on an opposing team has not been in the infield by the start of the 3rd inning, you should alert the opposing coach and give them time to rectify the problem rather than waiting for the inning to end and then calling for a forfeit.

### **Question: Can runners be tagged out when returned back to a base?**

Answer: It depends. Runners are to be safely sent back to base if done so by the umpire. If a runner mistakenly took extra bases or advanced on an overthrow (not from a live batted ball) and the ball is declared "dead" by the umpire, the runner will be returned safely to the base. However if the ball is still live, the runner can be tagged out when moving between bases.

## 8U

### **Question: What is the pitching distance in 8U?**

Answer: 30 feet from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. Pitchers and Adult Pitchers (AP) shall pitch from the rubber. If necessary, coaches may pitch from a closer distance if they are struggling to throw a strike. Coaches are encouraged to throw a more level pitch, rather than a high slow pitch-type lob.

### **Question: How does pitching work in 8U?**

Answer: When an 8U player pitches, they will be allowed to pitch to the full count. Balls and strikes will be called by coaches.

In 8u, a tee is no longer used in games. **After 3 strikes, the batter is called out.** If not using a player pitcher, the batter gets a maximum of 3 pitches and **every pitch from the AP will be considered a strike** (unless the last strike is a foul or hits the batter).

### **Question: What happens when a batter is hit by pitch in 8U?**

**Answer:** First base will be awarded to the batter if they are hit by a player pitch. The batter will no longer have the option to keep hitting and must take their base. If the adult pitcher hits the batter, that pitch will not count and the batter will be given another pitch.

### **Question: What happens if a batted ball hits the AP in 8U?**

Answer: If a batted ball hits the coach/pitcher, play on. The AP is a part of the field just like the umpire or any other defensive player. At no time shall the coach/pitcher intentionally obstruct play, but this will not be ruled as a dead ball or as an out.

### **Question: Is there stealing in 8U?**

Answer: Yes, each team will be allowed 3 steal attempts per inning. Stealing 2nd base and stealing 3rd base are allowed. Stealing home is not allowed. Runners may leave the base as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand (as per USA Softball).

### **Question: How many bases can a player take on an overthrow?**

*Same as in 10U, answered [above](#).*

## 6U

### **Question: How many bases a player could run on a hit. What is the rule?**

**Answer:** Any throw by a defensive player stops the runner from advancing beyond the base toward which the player was heading when the throw occurred.