



San Lorenzo Girls Softball League 2026 Rule Modifications



The 2026 USA Softball rulebook will be followed with these exceptions and/or modifications. The following pages outline the ground rules for all divisions. These are the basic rules applying to team staff, players, parents, and league fans.

General Safety:

1. Nothing shall stick out from the fence toward the playing fields. (Example: fingers, bats, hands, heads, etc.)
2. Metal or plastic will NOT be worn in the hair and/or visor or cap of any player. No jewelry shall be worn.
3. Pitchers cannot wear any clothing or use any equipment that is the same color as the ball.
4. Any player warming up a pitcher during a practice or a game MUST wear protective gear. Full catcher gear is preferred but a catcher or batting helmet is the minimum requirement.
5. All umpires must wear closed-toed shoes and shirts with sleeves. Plate umpires MUST wear ALL protective gear.
6. Golf carts are to be used for field maintenance only. No one under 16 years of age may drive the cart unless under direct supervision on a field by an adult during field maintenance.
7. Painting of SLZGSL equipment is not allowed. (Bats, helmets, etc.)
8. Players must not be in the dugout opening during pregame warmup or during the game.
9. The on-deck player must be facing the field to minimize the risk of being hit by a foul ball or errant throw.
10. There should absolutely be no hitting, or intentional throwing of any balls, against the fence. This includes regular softballs, reduced impact balls, sponge or whiffle balls.
11. No players, siblings, parents or other spectators are allowed to be standing in the stairwells leading onto the field. Additionally, the walkways exiting the fields should remain clear with no spectators, chairs, wagons or other items blocking the walkways.



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Field etiquette:

1. The board will hold a **zero-tolerance** policy for any player, parent or staff member that physically threatens or verbally becomes disruptive to a team, an umpire, staff member or player.
2. As a reminder, all registered players, parents, and team staff members have agreed to the SLZGSL code of conduct. Non-adherence to the code of conduct will subject you to disciplinary action, including but not limited to the following in any order or combination:
 - a. Verbal warning issued by the league
 - b. Written warning issued by the league
 - c. Suspension or immediate ejection from the SLZGSL event
 - d. Suspension from multiple league events
 - e. Season suspension or multiple season suspension issued by the SLZGSL
3. If a team staff member is ejected from a game, the suspension is in effect immediately and applies to any further competition on that day. (i.e. The team staff member ejected during the first game of the day may not be at the field for any subsequent games that day.)
 - a. When a team staff member is ejected from a game or event, the team staff member must leave the vicinity of the playing area and remove himself/herself completely from the area of the playing facility.
 - i. The expectation is the ejected team staff member follow an out of sight and out of sound approach.
 - b. An ejected team staff member may not have any further communication with the team members or game officials following the game.
 - c. The suspended team member may not participate in another contest at any level/age group until being reinstated by a member of the executive board.
4. Following the day of ejection, there shall be a minimum of one (1) additional game suspension for the team staff member ejected from the game or league event.
 - a. During the subsequent suspension period, the suspended player or team staff member may not attend practices, games, or other league events.
 - b. If the ejection was for the final game of the season and was NOT concerning a player, the person ejected shall serve the required suspension during the playoffs or the following year.
5. For the second ejection during a season, the suspension shall be a minimum three-game suspension and may be cause for additional penalties that may include suspension for the remainder of the season.
6. For the third ejection during the season, the suspension shall be cause for additional penalties including suspension for the remainder of the season
7. Any incident or notification of a disruptive team staff member and/or parent given to the Umpire in Chief by a game umpire must be brought to the Board of Directors for review.



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Team Staff:

1. **Only approved team staff** members are allowed on the field or in the dugout during games. All volunteer staff must wear a 2026 USA Softball card, or SLZGSL approved equivalent, for easy recognition during games. Non-Staff members will be asked to leave the field or dugout areas. Only rostered players are allowed in the dugouts. Siblings cannot be in the dugout or on the field unless they are a registered player on another SLZGSL team.
 - a. Teams must have a female chaperone present in the immediate area at all team functions.
 - b. Only female team staff may help catchers with their gear.
 - c. Male staff members are under the "shoulders up" and "ankles down" rule.
2. Home Team is to provide the "Official Scorekeeper".
 - a. Official scorekeepers should sit behind the backstop.
 - b. Visiting team scorekeepers may sit near the dugout fence, but not in the dugout.
3. It is the responsibility of the home team to prep, drag the field, place out bases and line the fields 30 minutes prior to game time.
4. It is the responsibility of the visiting team for the last game of the day to put the bases back in the SLZGSL storage area. Ensure all field prep equipment has been returned to storage. If the home team is from a visiting league, the home team from SLZGSL will need to handle this responsibility.
5. Team staff members must ensure that players are in proper uniform and have the proper equipment for their safety, including batting helmets with face guards and chin straps properly in place.
 - a. NO visors/hats under helmets
 - b. In age divisions that allow sliding, it is recommended all players wear sliding pads/shorts appropriate to their skill level.
6. BOTH TEAMS will leave their dugouts clean for the next team. Please throw away your trash. There shall be no eating in the dugout or on the field. No seeds, gum, etc. Water is allowed in plastic containers only.
7. Teams are encouraged to cheer for their team. However, team cheers should be positive. General rule of thumb: cheer for your team not against the other team.
 - a. Players should not kick the fence during their cheers.
 - b. Benches in the dugout are not drums and should not be used as noise makers.
 - c. No standing on the benches.



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General playing rules:

1. Players must be in the dugout before the start of the 3rd inning. In the event a player arrives after a completed 2nd inning, they are marked absent and do not play. If a player must leave the game for any reason, the player's next at bat is skipped without recording an out provided the team still has the minimum number of players required.
 - a. Once a player has been removed from the game, they can no longer participate in the game. For clarification purposes, this does not include regular substitutions during the game. The intent of this rule is to not penalize a team when a player leaves the game due to injury or any other reason that requires, they no longer participate in the game.
2. Except in the 6U division, if a team cannot field the necessary "minimum" number of players, 8, at game time, then ten minutes will be allowed before a forfeit is declared.
 - a. If a team starts a game with 8 players, they must finish with 7 players.
 - b. If a team starts with 9 players, they may finish with 8 players.
3. Teams will bat the entire lineup. (all divisions) Verbal defensive changes for pitchers and catchers will be allowed if the Umpire and the Official Scorekeeper are notified prior to the change taking place.
4. Run Ahead rule: 12 run lead after four innings, 8 runs ahead after five innings.
5. All players in uniform must play at least 2 defensive innings each game.
6. For 8U and younger, teams may field 10 defensive players on the field (pitcher, catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, RF, RC, LC and LF) The 4 outfielders should be at least 10 feet from the baseline.
7. For 10U and older, teams will field 9 defensive players on the field. (pitcher, catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, RF, RC, LC and LF)
8. All players in uniform must bat. (applies to all divisions) Any player who is batting and is not in the defensive lineup must be listed on the lineup card as an extra player (EP). EP's may occupy any place in the batting order. However, once the batting order is established, the batting order never changes.
9. A courtesy runner may be used if the pitcher or catcher is on base with two outs. The player who made the last batted out must be put in to run for the pitcher or catcher. Courtesy runners may also be permitted if a player is injured or is unable to continue base running due to injury. The player must, at a minimum, reach 1B prior to a courtesy runner being allowed.



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10. Borrowing players from another team is allowed when prior approval from the SLGZGL Player Agent is granted. The team manager should notify the Player Agent with as much time as possible so the appropriate notifications can be made.
 - a. Players should only be borrowed when the team is unable to field the minimum number of players (8) to play a game as scheduled.
 - b. The borrowed player must be added to the end of the batting lineup to avoid taking at bats away from other players.
 - c. A borrowed player is not allowed to pitch in the game and should be played in the outfield.

11. General Selection Criteria for borrowed players:
 - a. Players are selected from the division immediately below your division unless approved by the Player Agent or other League Representative.
 - b. Eligible players will have demonstrated a skill level that would be appropriate for player call up status.
 - c. Eligible players will generally be a 2nd year player by age in their current division.
 - d. Ideally, players are not borrowed on days/times that would interfere with their regular team schedule.

12. The intent of the SLZGSL Player Call Up system is to reduce or eliminate any forfeited games. It is difficult to reschedule games, and we do not want our players to miss any games. Additionally, this system provides a handful of players with the opportunity to play up in the division they'll likely be in the following season. The system is not intended to provide a team with a competitive advantage.

Game schedule modifications:

1. Rescheduled games - there are only THREE reasons to reschedule a game:
 - a. Acts of God
 - b. School Events– must demonstrate that the result is in less than 8 players being available to play.
 - c. Religion – must demonstrate that the result is in less than 8 players being available to play.

2. Never assume a game has been rained out. If you do not get contacted by a board member to cancel your game, show up at your scheduled game time ready to play. Sometimes games are only delayed. If you do not show up a forfeit may be issued.

3. Any suspended game shall be completed prior to the start of the next scheduled game between the teams in question. Inability to complete the suspended game at that time may result in a forfeit. All suspended or rescheduled games will be cleared through the Umpire-In-Chief or other League Representative.

4. Requests to reschedule for school or religious purposes must be made at least one week prior to the game date. The Umpire-in-Chief will determine the need to reschedule and will set the new date/time for the game. Teams must be able to provide a full team at that date/time or they may forfeit.



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Rules applying to the 6U division:

1. In the 6U division, games are 75 minutes in length or three times through the lineup for each team.
2. Field modifications: 25' pitching distance and base distance is 45'. Ball size: 10' reduced impact.
3. Infield fly rule is NOT in effect in this division.
4. Each player will receive up to 4 pitches from a coach pitcher. If the batter is unable to hit the 4th pitch, the batter will be given 3 swings off the tee.
 - a. A player will remain at bat if they foul the 4th or subsequent pitches.
 - b. A player will be out if they do not hit any part of the ball on the 3rd attempt off the tee.
5. Coach pitches must be thrown underhand. No player pitching allowed. Coach pitchers should pitch from the pitching plate using a "legal" pitch. Full windmill is not required.
 - a. If a ball hits a coach in fair territory, it is considered a live ball. The coach must make every effort to move out of the path of a hit ball.
 - b. It is required that he/she move across the opposite foul line and into dead ball territory as soon as the ball is hit and remain there until time is called.
6. In the 6U age divisions players may be called out if their hit ball is caught by the defensive team or "tagged" out as a base runner. However, outs have no inning limit. All players will have the opportunity to bat each inning. The half inning is only complete after the last batter in the lineup has their opportunity at the plate.
7. Team at bat should have a Coach or Team Staff member by 1st and 3rd as Base Coaches. These base coaches should ensure that the batter-runner stops at the appropriate base. Runners may only advance when a ball is hit "fair".
8. Outfielders must be positioned outside the base path. Only 5 infielders are allowed inside the base paths. This does not include the catcher. Two coaches will be allowed on the field for the team on defense to assist players as necessary. Coaches should not touch or interfere with a ball in play. Base running should stop based on the following:
 - a. A ball hit to the outfield is retrieved and thrown back into the infield. Once the ball crosses into the infield the running must stop. Base runners should be encouraged to take 2 bases on an outfield hit.
 - b. A ball hit into the infield is picked up and thrown towards a base. Running should stop when the ball reaches the general area of the base. Base runners should be encouraged to take 1 base on an infield hit.
 - c. The Last Batter rule;
 - i. Offense – the last batter's hit is treated as a homerun. The player is encouraged to run around the bases and ultimately to home plate.
 - ii. Defense – the team should attempt to make a play at 1B followed by a 2nd throw to home plate.



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Rule modifications applying to the 8U division:

1. Pitching distance: 30 feet
2. The 8U division uses the 10" reduced impact ball.
3. There is a minimum 90-minute time limit for 8U. No inning may start after 90 minutes. All play must stop at the drop-dead time of 2 hours regardless of game situation.
4. Each half inning will consist of three outs or four runs, whichever occurs first. There are no open innings in the 8U division. All innings have a four run limit. Official score or standings are not maintained in this division. Runs are recorded for the sole purpose of tracking the run limit.
5. No stealing allowed. Runners have the option to leave the base when the ball is released from the pitcher's hand.
 - a. If the ball is hit into fair territory, the runner may advance to the next base. They do not need to return and touch the base last touched before advancing.
 - b. If the pitched ball is a strike, ball or foul ball, the runner must return to the base before the ball has been returned to the pitcher.
6. Play stops when a ball hit to the outfield gets in the control of the pitcher. The pitcher must be in the circle with the ball for the play to stop.
7. Overthrows:
 - c. On a throw to first base: No batter can advance to second base as a result of an errant throw to first base. All other runners may only advance one base past the base they are going to on an errant throw to first base with liability of being put out if the ball stays in live ball territory.
 - d. On a throw to any other base or position: If on a throw to any other base an errant throw occurs, all runners and batter/runner may advance one base past the base they are going to with liability of being put out.
 - e. The umpire will only award a base to the runners if the ball has been thrown out of play. No bases will be awarded on errant throws when the ball stays in play.
 - f. Runner and batter/runner may be put out if they advance beyond the base they are entitled to on the errant throw. At the end of the play the umpire will return all runners to the base they are entitled to if they have not been put out.
8. Infield fly rule is NOT in effect in this division.
9. Dropped 3rd strike is NOT in effect in this division.
10. Bunting is allowed. **Exception:** No bunting off the staff pitcher.



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11. Pitchers may only pitch for up to two consecutive innings. After the second pitched inning the pitchers must be rotated. The pitcher may return to pitch after not pitching for two of the first 4 innings. No maximum innings or restrictions for next game. One pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched.
 - g. Clarification: The intent of this rule is to ensure a pitcher does not pitch more than 2 of the first 4 innings.

12. Pitching - When the player pitcher has pitched four "called BALLS", the staff pitcher will come in to pitch. The strike count remains the same and the ball count reverts to "zero". The staff pitcher continues to pitch from the pitching plate and has a **three pitch limit until the batter either:**
 - h. Hits a fair ball, or
 - i. Strikes out, either a called strike three by the umpire or a swing and a miss strike three, or
 - j. Is called out after the staff pitcher has pitched 3 pitches.
 - k. Exception: If the third staff pitcher pitch is hit foul, the at-bat continues until the final pitch results in one of the above scenarios (A or B) or the staff member pitches a "ball".

13. If a batted ball hits the coach/pitcher the ball is dead and the batter is out. At no time shall the coach/pitcher obstruct play.
 - l. Player/Pitcher must have one foot in the circle at the time of coach/pitcher is pitching.
 - m. Coach/Pitcher must stay in the circle during play and MAY NOT provide Coaching assistance.

14. If a batter is hit by a player pitched ball, the batter will be awarded first base if in the umpire's judgement an attempt to move out of the way was made. At the umpire's discretion, the batter may be offered the opportunity to continue the at bat. Note: coaches and umpires must remind players that they are to make an attempt to move.
 - n. Exception: Batter will not be awarded a based on a hit by pitch from the staff pitcher.

15. If a player-pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of that inning.
 - o. The player-pitcher may return to pitch subsequent innings once they have taken one full inning off and provided no other pitching limits have been met. (i.e. has not pitched more than 2 of the first 4 innings)
 - p. If a player-pitcher hits 5 batters in a game, the player-pitcher may not pitch at any time during the remainder of the game.



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Rule modifications applying to the 10U division:

1. Pitching distance: 35 feet
2. The 10U division uses the 11" softball.
3. There is a minimum 90-minute time limit for 10U. Time limit cannot be called until after a game is official.
4. In the 10U division, a game is official after 3 innings, or after 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
5. No inning may start after 90 minutes. All play must stop at the drop-dead time of 2 hours regardless of game situation.
 - a. For divisions where score is kept, the final score is the score when the drop dead time is declared.
6. Pitchers may only pitch for up to two consecutive innings. After the second pitched inning the pitchers must be rotated. The pitcher may return to pitch after not pitching for two of the first 4 innings. No maximum innings or restrictions for next game. One pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched.
 - a. Clarification: The intent of this rule is to ensure a pitcher does not pitch more than 2 of the first 4 innings.
7. If a player-pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of that inning.
 - a. The player-pitcher may return to pitch subsequent innings once they have taken one full inning off and provided no other pitching limits have been met. (i.e. has not pitched more than 2 of the first 4 innings)
 - b. If a player-pitcher hits 5 batters in a game, the player-pitcher may not pitch at any time during the remainder of the game.
8. Stealing is allowed but only one base at a time. Players may steal home.
9. In the first 3 innings of the game, the innings will end after 3 outs or after 4 runs are scored. In the remaining innings there is no run limit until the run ahead rule is in effect.



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Rule modifications applying to the 12U, 14U and 16U divisions:

1. Pitching distance for 12U = 40 feet and 14U/16U = 40 feet.
2. The 12U and older divisions use the 12" softball.
3. There is a minimum 90-minute time limit for 12U and older. Time limit cannot be called until after a game is official.
4. In the 12U and older divisions, a game is official after 4 innings, or after 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
5. No inning may start after 90 minutes. All play must stop at the drop-dead time of 2 hours regardless of game situation.
 - a. For divisions where score is kept, the final score is the score when the drop-dead time is declared.
6. A pitcher pitching four or more innings in a game may not pitch until the third inning of the following game. One pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched.
7. If a player-pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning, the player-pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of that inning.
 - a. The player-pitcher may return to pitch subsequent innings once they have taken one full inning off.
 - b. If a player-pitcher hits 5 batters in a game, the player-pitcher may not pitch at any time during the remainder of the game.
8. In the first 3 innings of the game, the innings will end after 3 outs or after 4 runs are scored. In the remaining innings there is no run limit until the run ahead rule is in effect.