



JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SOFTBALL RULES (SPRING 2026)

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1. **LEAGUE POLICIES**

1.1 *Eligibility*

- a) A female student athlete is eligible for participation in junior high school Softball if they are enrolled in and attend a CSAA member school and meet all of CSAA's age, and grade requirements.
- b) Only students enrolled in the CSAA member school are eligible. Students attending other schools in a shared "campus" educational facility are not eligible to participate in CSAA athletic programs.
- c) It is the responsibility of the member school to ensure all eligibility requirements are met.
 - Please refer to "CSAA Student Eligibility Guidelines" for further information.
- d) For participation in Girls High School Softball competition, a student shall only be eligible while enrolled in grades 6-8 up until their 14th birthday. Any student who will reach the age of 15 before or during the softball season (before June 1 of the current school year), cannot participate.
- e) If a student in 8th grade participates in varsity competition for a school that participates in junior high school competition, that student is ineligible to participate in junior high school competition.
- f) If it is determined that a school used an ineligible player in a league game, the game will be declared a forfeit, and the win will be given to the opposing team.
- g) It is the responsibility of each member school to ensure each student athlete has undergone a physical examination within the last calendar year before participating in athletics.

1.2 *Uniforms*

- a) All teams must be in matching uniforms, tops and shorts, with unique numbers for each player.
 - Jersey numbers cannot switch from player to player. No exceptions.
 - If the team does not have matching uniforms before their first regular season game, they must inform the league beforehand.

1.3 *Jewelry*

- a) All earrings, facial piercings, body piercings, and bands must be removed before the start of the game.
- b) Glasses that are accepted:
 - Plastic framed glasses
 - Sports goggles
 - Providing they are strapped around the head sports goggles
- c) Glasses that are not permitted:
 - Lenses made of glass
 - Metal framed glasses
 - Any other type of eyewear that the referee/umpire deems could be dangerous.
- d) If jewelry is for religious reasons:
 - Child must have a letter from their school
 - Letter must be on school letter head and signed by the principal
 - Child must have a letter from their parent as well
 - Letters must be brought with the child to every game throughout the season
 - If a child wears a religious band on wrist it can be worn but it must be covered with athletic tape and/or sweat band.

1.4 Rosters

- a) Rosters are due by the team's 1st game of the season. This will be strictly enforced.
 - If rosters are not submitted before the first game, team will be able to play but will receive a forfeit loss until roster is submitted.
- b) All team rosters will consist of a maximum of twenty (20) players and must contain the following information:
 - Name of school
 - Names and telephone numbers of head coach and assistant coaches
 - Legal first and last name of each player
 - Grade, age, month, day and year of birth of each player
 - Uniform number of each player
 - Signature of principal certifying all players are enrolled at participating school.
- c) It is the responsibility of each member school to ensure the accuracy of the information provided on the league roster. The information provided on the submitted roster is considered official and will be the evidential basis of any eligibility challenges.
- d) Changes to the roster cannot be made after it is submitted to the league office without the written consent of the Director of Athletics.
- e) Roster changes will be approved/denied at the sole discretion of the Director of Athletics in accordance with the hardship provision.

1.5 Scheduling

- a) The season will generally start the first week of April and continue through the last week in May. Depending on the number of games postponed due to rain, the season may extend into June.
- b) All games postponed due to rain will be rescheduled by CSAA later in the season.
- c) Games will be scheduled on any day of the week except Sunday. Games will not be scheduled during Spring Break or Memorial Day weekend.
- d) In early March, before the draft schedule is released, CSAA will request that each participating school submit seven (7) blackout dates to the league office.
 - Games will not be scheduled on these blackout dates.
- e) It is the responsibility of each participating school to ensure that the blackout dates are inclusive of any conflicts the school may have with playing games on that day. These conflicts include (but are not limited to):
 - School-specific closings (half-days, early dismissal, etc)
 - Testing (Mid-terms, interim assessments, SATs, etc)
 - Parent/Teacher Conferences
 - School Proms/Dances
 - School Trips
 - Graduation dates
 - Vacations/absences of the coaches
- f) Schools will be expected to play on any day that is not listed as a blackout date. Any schedule conflicts presented to the league after the final schedule has been released will be reviewed and a final decision on whether to reschedule the game will be made at the sole discretion of the Director of Athletics.
- g) Please keep in mind that if you cannot play on a specific day of the week (All Tuesdays) that specific day will be counted towards your blackout dates.

1.6 *Playoff Tournament and Tiebreakers*

- a) CSAA will determine the playoff seeding once the regular season is completed using the following criteria:
 - Division Overall Record
 - Head-to-Head result
 - Points against
 - Run differential (Runs scored minus runs against)
- b) A player must have played in at least half of the regular season games to be eligible for the playoffs. Exceptions will be made for injured players at the sole discretion of the Director of Athletics.
- c) Any team with an outstanding balance will be ineligible for playoffs until fees are paid to CSAA.
 - The fees must be paid 1 day prior to your first playoff game.
 - Fees must be hand delivered to a CSAA member.
- d) During the playoffs, the mercy rule is applied after the 4th inning. If the home team is trailing by ten (10) runs in the 4thinning or later, they will be allowed a final at-bat. If they do not reduce the deficit to nine (9) runs or less in their final at-bat, the game is over. If the home team scores enough to reduce the deficit to 9th runs or less, the game will continue.
- e) **In all playoffs and championship games, the bat-around rule will not be in effect.** A team must register all 3 outs to end an inning.

1.7 *Filming*

- a) Parents and spectators are allowed to film. Players in uniform are not allowed to record games.
- b) Filming/Recording will only be reviewed in case of an altercation, or a player gets injured.

1.8 *Cancellation of Games*

- a) Any cancellations due to weather will be made by CSAA by 12pm.
- b) Rescheduling of rainouts will be made by the league director and agreed upon by both schools.

2. GAMEDAY POLICIES

2.1 *Game duration*

- a) All weekday games (Monday-Friday) must start at 4:300 pm and are scheduled for five (5) innings or 1.5 hours long (in compliance with the field permit).
 - If there are no scheduled uses of the field when the permit has expired, the game may continue past 1.5 hours to complete five (5) innings at the umpire's judgment.
- b) If 5 innings cannot be completed by the end of the permit time, the score of the last completed inning shall be used in determining the final score.
- c) The ten (10) run mercy rule will be in effect **after the 3rd inning**.
 - If the home team is trailing by ten (10) runs in the 3rd inning or later, they will be allowed a final at-bat.
 - If they do not reduce the deficit to nine (9) runs or less in their final at-bat, the game is over. If the home team scores enough to reduce the deficit to nine (9) runs or less, the game will continue.
- d) A game is considered an official game after **three (3) innings**.
- e) Only the home plate umpire can delay or postpone a game due to weather or field conditions once the teams have arrived at the field.

2.2 Forfeits

- a) All forfeited games are entered into the standings as a 10-0 loss.
- b) A fifteen (15) minute forfeit time is allowed for all games. This will be strictly enforced by the umpires.
 - All teams must have at least eight (8) players to start an official game. Teams that have less than 8 players by the designated forfeit time will forfeit the game.
 - If a team starts a game with eight (8) players, the 9th spot in the lineup will be an automatic out every time through the lineup.
 - If the 9th player arrives before their first turn at bat, they can be inserted into the lineup without penalty. If the 9th player arrives after their first turn at bat, they can be inserted into the lineup in the 10th spot but the 9th spot will remain an automatic out for the remainder of the game.
- c) Any team that forfeits late three (3) times in a season will be dropped from the schedule.
 - Any forfeit after 12pm is considered a late forfeit.
 - After the 3rd late forfeit, the team will be dropped from the rest of the schedule and will not be eligible for playoffs.
 - Fees will still have to be paid before the season is over.

2.3 Suspension /Ejection of Student/Coaches

- a) Any player ejected from a game must leave the immediate playing area.
 - Players ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior will face a minimum one-game suspension.
- b) Any coach ejected from a game must leave the immediate playing area.
 - If a coach is ejected from the game and there is no other coach to handle the coaching duties, the game will be called and awarded to the opposing team.
 - Coaches ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior will face a minimum of two (2) game suspension.

2.4 Equipment and Safety

- a) The home team, as designated by the league schedule, is responsible for bringing all bases, home plate and a pitching rubber.
 - 1ST base should be a white and orange double base of single construction.
- b) If the visiting team must supply any of the equipment that the home team was required to bring, the home team will forfeit their right to be the home team.
- c) Both teams are responsible for bringing **two (2) 12" Neon Soft touch Training Softballs to the game.** Please refer to CSAA Approved Equipment list ([Approved Equipment List](#))
- d) The following equipment is required for players:
 - All catchers must wear full protective gear including the helmet with faceguard, chest protector, and shin guards.
 - A throat protector and a helmet are mandatory for catchers and the helmet must provide protection to both sides of a catcher's head. The helmet/mask combination must meet NJSF standards.
 - All batters must wear helmets. Cage on helmet is optional.
 - All players must wear helmets on the base paths.
 - No metal cleats.
- e) No player will be allowed to play with a hard cast. A doctor's release note must be presented to the league before they can play again.
- f) Each teacher/coach must actively supervise team members, until they are safely away from the site of competition.

2.5 Protest Protocol

- a) Protests may only be made if a rule is alleged to have been applied incorrectly or not applied.
 - No protest of judgment calls may be entered.
 - The coach must verbally inform the home plate Umpire of the protest before play commences or resumes.
- b) Judgment calls include (but are not limited to):
 - Balls/Strikes
 - Out/Safe calls
 - Infield fly calls
 - Obstruction
 - Fair/Foul calls
- c) All protests of rules interpretations must be made in writing and turned into the home plate umpire.
- d) All protests must be emailed to the Director of Athletics within 24 hours after the completion of game, on the proper Protest form. All protests should be sent to csaacompliance@gmail.com
- e) The Compliance Officer will investigate all protests and will deliver a ruling within 48 hours of receipt of the protest. If a ruling cannot be made within 48 hours, the protesting coach will be notified of the delay and informed of when to expect a ruling.
- f) A coach can only protest the eligibility of a player within 48 hours of a regular season game and 24 hours of a play-off game.

2.6 Sportsmanship and Dugout Policy

- a) All teams are expected to show sportsmanship after each game. Coaches and players must line up and shake hands after each game.
 - Exceptions to this rule are made for injured players after the coach informs the umpire of the injury.
- b) Players who fail to comply with the rule will be suspended for one (1) game.
 - If an umpire witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the offending players will be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion. No appeals will be considered. Foul play will not be tolerated.
- c) Umpires have the right to determine what is considered offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the umpire will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.
- d) Coaches are responsible for the actions of their players and spectators on and off the field.
- e) Foul language, obscene gestures, abuse of the umpires and any other unsportsmanlike actions will not be tolerated from any coaches or players and may result in ejection or forfeiture of the current game, suspension from subsequent games and/or ejection from the league.
- f) Only coaches, players, and managers are allowed in the dugout during the game.
 - Coaches and managers must be in team apparel/colors and players must be in uniform.
 - No spectators are allowed in the dugout during the game.
 - All teams are responsible for removing their trash from the dugout area after the game.

2.7 Fighting/Altercations

- a) Fighting of any kind will not be tolerated. Any player who throws a punch will be ejected for fighting and automatically suspended for their next game.
- b) If more than one (1) player fights during or after a game, it is considered a team fight.
- c) If a team fight takes place, a team can be suspended for one (1) game or the entire season.
 - During a team fight if one (1) player is reported to be out of control, that player can serve a suspension longer than the team suspension.
- d) Coaches are responsible for controlling their benches during an altercation. If a player leaves the bench to participate in an on-field altercation, that player will be ejected from the game and suspended for the next game.
- e) After a review of the incident (which can include statements from the coaches, referees, Game Supervisor and/or any video footage, additional penalties can be assessed at the discretion of the Director of Athletics.
- f) CSAA reserves the right to suspend a player for a minimum of one (1) game and maximum of the entire season.

2.8 Weather Adjustments

- a) CSAA reserves the right to change the game duration if weather conditions or field time constraints become an issue. Games may be played in the rain (at the umpire's discretion) unless the Parks Department tells us otherwise.

2.9 AED Unit/CPR Certification

- a) Charter School Athletic Association Mandates AED/CPR Certification for all coaches.
- b) Games cannot proceed unless one team presents the required AED unit and CPR certificate on site.
 - If the AED unit is not present by either team the game will not be played and considered a tie.

2.10 Submission of Scores

- a) The winning team is responsible for submitting the final game score to the league. All game scores must be texted or emailed to the league no later than 24 hours after completion of the game.
 - If scores are not submitted within the time given, the game will be awarded to the opposing team.
 - This ensures accurate and timely updating of the standings on the league website.

3. GAMEDAY RULES

3.1 Game Rules

- a) The pitching rubber will be 38 feet from home plate.
- b) Bases will be 60 feet apart.
- c) All games are five (5) innings or 1.5 hours long.
- d) The championship game is six (6) innings without a time limit.
- e) After every game the winning team must submit a picture of the following:
 - The scorebook
 - Final score
- f) All line-up sheets must be turned in before the start of every game.
 - All lineup cards must be kept in case of a question of a student's eligibility.
 - All scorebooks must be emailed after every game to csaahsbaseballsoftball@gmail.com
- g) All field playing rules will be determined by home plate umpire before the start of the game.
- h) Nine (9) players can start an official game.

- i) An extra outfielder (10 fielders) is optional.
- j) Starting players who have been substituted out for a pinch runner can re-enter the game in their defensive position, such as shortstop, etc.
- k) An extra hitter (11 batters) is allowed. (optional)

3.2 Lineups and Ground Rules

- a) Umpires will go over the ground rules with both coaches at the beginning of the game.
- b) It is the responsibility of the coaches to clarify any interpretation of the ground rules with the umpires before the start of the game.
- c) It is the responsibility of the coaches to accurately relay any interpretation of the ground rules to their players.
- d) All lineups must be turned into the umpire and the opposing coach, on an official lineup sheet, before the start of the game.
- e) The lineup sheet must contain the following information:
 - Name of school and coach
 - Legal first and last name of each player in the lineup and substitutes
 - Names on lineup sheet must match name on official roster.
 - Position of each player starting the game
 - Uniform number of each player
- f) It is the responsibility of each coach to ensure the accuracy of the lineup card. The information provided on the lineup card is considered official and will be the evidential basis of any challenges.
- g) Each team must keep an accurate scorebook of the game play to resolve any discrepancies of the score or batting order. The scorebook is considered part of the official record of the game and must be provided to the league to resolve any protests.

3.3 DH Rule (Optional)

- a) A Designated hitter is not allowed.

3.4 Re-Entry Rule

- a) There is NO RE-ENTRY rule. Once a starter exits the game, they cannot return.

3.5 Substitutions

- a) Coaches must inform the home plate umpire and the opposing coach of any substitutions to the current lineup.
- b) Players in the game may rotate positions but must remain in the same position in the batting order. The player designated as the extra hitter (EH) is not allowed to play in the field.
- c) A substitute player who has been removed from the game may re-enter the game if there is an injury to a player and there are no remaining substitutes.

3.6 Batting

- a) All thrown bats will result in the batter immediately being called out (the play is dead) and all runners have to return to their original base.
- b) Bunting is allowed.
- c) Batters must attempt to move out of the way of pitched balls in the batter's box. First base will not be awarded to the batter if the umpire deems the batter did not attempt to move out of the way.

- d) Any batter who enters the batter's box without a helmet will be called out immediately if a pitch is thrown.
- e) The "Bat-Around Rule" will be enforced. An inning will be considered over if the leadoff hitter comes up to bat twice in the same inning.
- f) The bat-around rule will not be enforced in a team's last at-bat. The game cannot end by invoking the bat-around rule
 - If the visiting team is losing by more than 10 runs going into the top of the 3rd inning, the mercy rule would be invoked if the deficit is not reduced to 9 or less by the end of the top of the 4th. In this instance, the visiting team can continue to bat until they reduce the deficit to 9, or until 3 defensive outs are recorded.
 - If the home team is trailing by more than 10 runs going into the bottom of the 4th inning, the home team may continue to bat until they reduce the deficit to 9 (to avoid the mercy rule) or until all 3 defensive outs are recorded.
 - If the home team is trailing going into the bottom of the 6th inning (or last inning as declared by the umpire due to permit time), all 3 defensive outs must be recorded to end the game.
- g) Teams can use one extra hitter in their lineup. This player must be designated as such in the lineup and may not enter the field as a defensive replacement unless there is an injury to a fielder and there are no more substitutes.
- h) No pass ball on third strike. On 3 strikes the batter is out.
- i) If a team bats out of order, the player(s) who were skipped will be declared out. If more than 3 batters were skipped, the inning is declared over, and the proper batting order resumes the next inning.

3.7 Base Running/Violations

- a) Bases will be set 60 feet apart.
- b) The orange outside base belongs to the runner; the white inside base belongs to the fielder.
 - If a runner touches the white inside base and makes contact with the fielder, the runner will be called out.
- c) Batters must run through first base and turn right towards the first base dugout.
 - A runner who turns left towards 2nd base can be considered as trying to advance and can be tagged out.
- d) Sliding is not allowed at 1st base.
- e) All sliding must be feet first. Runners may only slide/dive headfirst to return to a base.
- f) Sliding is mandatory for all close plays at any base. If the runner does not slide on a close play, the umpire can call the runner out.
- g) **Stealing bases is not allowed**
- h) A base runner may take the next base if the pitcher drops the return throw from the catcher, or if the catcher overthrows the pitcher on the return throw.
- i) Base runners may take a lead after the pitcher releases the ball. Runners that leave the base early will be declared out.
- j) If a base becomes dislodged during a sliding play, the runner must stay on the spot where the base was originally located. Runners that move off the original base location to make contact with the dislodged base and are tagged by a fielder with the ball will be called out.
- k) All appeal plays must start from the pitching rubber.
 - The coaches must notify the home plate umpire of which base is being appealed and then the pitcher must throw to the base that is in question.
 - The umpire will call the runner safe if the appeal process is not carried out properly.

- l) A courtesy runner can be provided for the catcher in any situation to allow the player to change into the catcher's gear and shorten the changeover time in between innings.
- m) The courtesy runner may be a bench player who is not in the lineup. If no bench players are available, the courtesy runner must be the last batted out in the lineup. If there are no outs in an inning, the courtesy runner is the player who made the last out of the previous inning.
- n) All base coaches (adults) on 1st and 3rd base must wear team jersey or apparel. Students are not allowed to coach.

3.8 Pitching

- a) Pitching rubber is to be placed 38 feet from the rear point of home plate (mound can be moved up if both coaches agree)
- b) **Fast pitch/windmill pitching is not allowed.** Underhand pitching is allowed where the pitcher's arm does not go above their head
- c) All pitchers must start with at least one (1) foot in contact with the pitching rubber. Pitchers can take up to two (2) steps and must stay inside of the pitching circle or marked pitching line. (8 feet from the rubber)
- d) If a pitcher starts with their front foot on the rubber and their back foot behind the rubber, the first forward movement of the back foot is considered the first step and the first forward movement of the front foot is considered the second step and then the pitch must be released.
- e) If a pitcher starts with their back foot on the rubber and their front foot in front of the rubber, the first forward movement of the back foot is considered the first step and the first forward movement of the front foot is considered the second step and then the pitch must be released.
- f) Balk rule will be enforced.
 - A pitcher must make one continuous motion towards home plate when there are runners on base or the runners will be awarded one base.
- g) A 60 second warm up time for pitchers will be allowed between innings. Coaches/players are allowed to warm up pitchers while catchers are putting on equipment.
- h) Coaches are allowed one trip to the pitcher's mound per inning. If a second trip is made in the same inning, a different player must continue pitching.

3.9 Intentional Walk

- a) Umpire must be notified.
- b) Four (4) intentional balls do not need to be thrown by pitcher.
- c) An intentional walk of batters at the end of the lineup to invoke the bat-around rule does not need to be carried out.

3.10 Speed up Rule

- a) Teams have 60 seconds to warm-up pitchers/fielders between innings before the umpire calls batter up.
- b) Pitchers will be allowed 3 warm-up pitches between innings

3.11 Mercy Rule

- a) After three (3) complete innings, if a team is trailing by ten (10) runs, the game will end and the win will be awarded to the team that is ahead.
- b) If the home team is down by ten (10) runs at the beginning of the inning, the home team must have their final at bat.

3.12 Fielding

- a) Teams are allowed to have ten (10) fielders. If a team chooses to start the game with nine (9) fielders while having substitutes on the bench, they must use nine (9) fielders for the remainder of the game.
- b) Fielders covering bases cannot block the bases. Fielders must give the base-runner a path to the base or the runner will be called safe.
- c) Catchers without the ball must give base-runners a path to home plate. If the catcher blocks home plate without the ball, the runner will be called safe.
- d) Fielders blocking the progress of the base-runner without the ball will be called for interference and the runner will be called safe.
- e) Only infielders in possession of the ball can call a timeout.
- f) Fielders must allow batter access to the orange base at 1stbase. Fielders blocking the orange base will be called for interference and the runner will be called safe.

3.13 Coaches

- a) Each coach will actively supervise team members until the game is completed.
- b) All coaches at 1st or 3rd base must wear school apparel.
- c) Umpires will speak only to the head coaches during a dispute.

3.14 Mound visits

- a) Coaches get three (3) charged mound visits per game. A charged visit is one in which the pitcher is not replaced. After the 3rd visit the pitcher must be pulled from the game. If the game goes into extra innings each team will be given one extra mound visit per inning.