



## 2025 RULES SUPPLEMENT TO USA SOFTBALL RULEBOOK

*These rules are not all encompassing. The current "Official Rules of Softball" USA Code shall govern any rules not listed below. When playing inter-league games, you must refer to the specific inter-league's rules for that season.*

### **Section 1. Ground and League Rules**

1. The Home Team will be responsible for the Official Scorebook/Game Changer. Each team must provide their own scorekeeper who will not be permitted on the field or in the dugout but must remain in proximity to the official plate umpire.
2. The Home Team will be responsible for the field set up and/or field maintenance, which will be returned to the equipment box at the conclusion of the day's game(s). The visiting team will be responsible for end of day field maintenance and clean up.
3. Home Team will occupy 3rd base Dugout. Visiting Team will occupy 1st Base Dugout.
4. In keeping with the rules of USA Softball and HBCSD, possession of alcoholic beverages or smoking on the game or practice fields is strictly prohibited. School property is a tobacco free area, this includes vapes.

### **Section 2. Playing Rules**

1. Games may be cancelled by the game umpire or Umpire-in-Chief if the playing fields are not deemed safe or in reasonable playing condition and cannot be put into safe and playable condition in a short period of time. In the instance of rain, the umpire shall call a rain delay and may call a completed game (after 3 full innings) if necessary. Play should be suspended immediately without regard to timing within the inning when spectator or participant safety is compromised (for example, in the event of lightning detected within the danger zone, serious injury to a participant or if players' footing or grip on the bat or ball is obviously compromised)
2. Game time limits – for all age divisions, except 6U:  
1:20/1:40 (No new inning after One Hour and Twenty minutes, drop dead at 1:40)  
6U – 1:15 Each team will bat five (5) players or half their batting order per inning. Teams should have an equal # of at bats or interleague rules

3. 14U, 12U, and 10U will have a mercy rule in place for all games, as specified below.

Run Ahead (Mercy) Rule

12 runs after 5 innings

4. 8U will use ten (10) defensive players in the field and (4) of those players will be positioned on the outfield grass. 6U may use up to eleven (11) defensive players in the field and (5) of those players will be positioned on the outfield grass.
5. 12U - 6 run cap for first 3 innings. 10U (5) run cap, and 8U shall (4) run cap for the first (3) innings. When the run cap is hit, the umpire will declare that inning completed, and no additional runs will be awarded. There is unlimited scoring potential after the 3rd inning. Any inning after the 3rd inning should be declared as "open".
6. 10U, 8U, & 6U players must play in the infield for a minimum of one (1) inning per game.
7. 6U teams do not record wins or losses. There are no standings.
8. 6U will bat five (5) players or half of their batting order each inning. Then change sides.
9. Pitching restrictions
  - A. Pitchers will be limited to the following outs per game:
    - 14U - No pitching restrictions
    - 12U - Pitchers may not pitch more than 12 outs per game
    - 10U - Pitchers may not pitch more than 9 outs per game
    - 8U - Pitchers may not pitch more than 6 outs per game for the first half of season (Feb-Mar).
    - 8U - Pitchers may not pitch more than 9 outs per game for the second half of season (April-May).
  - B. Pitchers will be limited to the following number of appearances per game
    - 14U - No pitching restrictions
    - 12U - Pitchers are limited to no more than 3 appearances per game
    - 10U - Pitchers are limited to no more than 3 appearances per game
    - 8U - Pitchers are limited to no more than 3 appearances per game (unless removed by an umpire)
10. A player who is ejected from the game for a playing rule infraction shall be ejected for the remainder of the game. A player ejected for misconduct will also be suspended from the next regularly scheduled league game.
11. If a player is injured or becomes ill during a game and she cannot continue, an out will not be charged for each subsequent at bat. If a player leaves the game for any other reason, an out will be charged only the first time the at bat is missed.

12. A player who has a previous injury may inform the umpire prior to the game and will be allowed a pinch runner after she reaches first base. A player injured during the game will be allowed a pinch runner after she reaches first base.
13. International Tie Break Rule – At the end of seven innings or time, the “at bat” team will place the last batter of the previous innings at second base. The tiebreak inning will then begin. Each succeeding “at bat” will start as above. The game will continue until the tie is broken. This applies to playoff tournament games only. Regular season games may end in a tie.
14. Short Handed Rule – Starting game with less than prescribed number. SHB will allow (7) players to start and finish a game. Team may add a pick-up player if need to get their roster to (9) players. The pick-up player must be registered to an SHB team for the season being played. They must play outfield and bat last in the lineup. Pick-up players may play up (1) division if parents and both coaches agree that the player is of suitable ability for the division.
  - A. Regular Season – No outs shall be assessed to teams having vacant spots in the order.
  - B. End of Season Tourney – Applies to 8U and above. Only one out, one time, will be declared the first time when a team has vacant spot(s) in the order due to playing shorthanded. It is declared when the first vacant spot is due to bat. An inning may end on this out.
15. Batting order – Round Robin batting will be used. All players present shall be listed on the official line-up and shall bat in the order listed for the entire game.
16. Courtesy Runners – only allowed for a pitcher or a catcher. Runner to be the player furthest in the lineup and not on base (example: if batter # 5 is on base and is a pitcher or catcher she may be allowed to have a courtesy runner and that runner would be batter # 4 in the line or if on base herself it would revert to batter # 3, etc.

### **8U Special Rule Deviations**

First half of the season (February - March)

- A. FIRST HALF of the season: If a batter receives four (4) balls from the opposing pitcher, the batter’s coach shall pitch to the batter. The coach/batter will assume the strike count and continue to pitch to the batter (up to four (4) pitches max). The umpire will rule on each pitch utilizing the strike zone. The batter may hit or strike out; she may not walk. If the maximum 4 pitches are thrown without the batter hitting, batter is called out. This out is recorded as a strike out. If the 4th pitch results in a foul ball, the coach will continue to pitch until the batter strikes out or hits the ball in play. No tee shall be used.
- B. During the FIRST HALF of the season, each pitcher is limited to no more than three (3) appearances per game (unless removed by an umpire) and may not pitch more than six (6) outs per game.
- C. If the coach-pitcher is struck by a batted ball, it will be counted as a dead ball and the batter will assume the prior pitch count. All base runners must return to their previous base.

- D. SECOND HALF of the Season (April-May): If a batter receives four (4) balls from the opposing pitcher, the batter will be awarded first base. Once the bases have become loaded from walks, hits, or HBP, the player/pitcher will continue pitching to the next batter. If the batter is hit by the pitch with the bases loaded, the batter is awarded first base and the run scores. If four (4) balls are delivered from the pitcher, the batter's coach shall pitch to the batter. The coach/batter will assume the strike count and continue to pitch to the batter (up to four (4) pitches max). The umpire will rule on each pitch utilizing the strike zone. The batter may hit or strike out; she may not walk. If the maximum four (4) pitches are thrown without the batter hitting, batter is called out. This out is recorded as a strike out. If the 4th pitch results in a foul ball, the coach will continue to pitch until the batter strikes out or hits the ball in play. A batter may strike out against the coach on called strikes. No tee shall be used in 8U at any time.
- E. During the SECOND HALF of the season, each pitcher is limited to no more than three (3) appearances per game (unless removed by an umpire) and may not pitch more than 9 outs per game.
- F. 8U Spring League end of year tournament games, player-pitch only, no coach pitch. All pitching limits are in effect for each pitcher (9 outs per game and 3 appearances per game). Exception: The tournament games and final championship game format and pitching rules are subject to BOD review and approval for each season.
- G. 8U – If a ball pitched by the opposing pitcher hits the batter, the batter will be awarded first base. If a ball pitched by a coach hits the batter, the batter must continue at bat.
- H. 8U – The coach must pitch the ball from the pitcher's mound (30 feet).
- I. 8U cannot steal home base on a wild pitch or passed ball. 8U runners can only steal one base on each passed ball. Overthrows by the catcher do not result in additional bases being awarded to runners. Runners may steal one base at a time. Runners may only steal second or third base upon release of the ball from the pitcher's hand. Home plate is closed. (even on a ball thrown out of play on a steal of third). No stealing off coach pitcher. 8U will not use the dropped third strike rule; players will be called out and cannot advance to first base.
- J. 8U base runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- K. 8U – No bunting or stealing during coach pitch.
- L. If the ball gets caught in the BACKSTOP at any time, it will be considered a Dead Ball. Base runners will be awarded one base.
- M. Required Playing Time – All players present must play a minimum of three defensive innings per game. No player shall sit more than 2 consecutive innings and shall sit no more than 3 innings total. If the required amount of playing time is not met due to a mercy rule or called game, then that player must start the next game. Innings do not need to be played consecutively.
- N. Ruling of Catcher/Pitcher overthrow – If the runner is standing on the base or is retreating to a base, then the runner does not advance forward.

O. Overthrow – Only one base is awarded on an overthrow to a base.

P. To Stop Play Ball must only pass the plane of the pitching circle to stop play.

### **6U Special Rule Deviations**

The coach must pitch from inside the pitching circle.

6U – COACH pitched for the entire game. The coach will pitch three (3) pitches per child. If the player does not hit the ball within three (3) pitches, the player will then use a tee until she hits the ball. The coach may allow a player to hit off the batting tee without any pitches being thrown.