

## CIRL SOFTBALL RULES - 2025

All rules in accordance with USA Softball Rules with the following exceptions/adaptations.

### Field and Equipment

- Ball: 3-4 Grade (11") 5-6 Grade (12")
- Pitching distance: 3-4 Grade (35') 5-6 Grade (40')
- Base distance: 60'
- Batting Helmets with face masks are required. Chin strongly encouraged.
- Catchers mask with dangling throat protector is required.
- Fielding mask for pitcher required, optional for other infield positions.
- No steel spikes.

### The Game

- A maximum of 5 innings will be played. No new inning will start after 1:15 minutes of play. Once an inning is started it will be completed, unless the home team is ahead. Game time is from first warm up pitch, not scheduled game time. Ties after the final inning will end in a tie ballgame. Home team will not bat in the final inning, if leading, in the first game of a double header.
- The final score shall be reported when the game is "officially over". For example, if the home team is ahead after final inning of visitor at bat or when the home team scores winning run in final at bat. No score reverting to a previous inning.
- In 3-4 Grade 10 defensive players are allowed, the 10th player must be positioned in the outfield grass.
- Teams must have 8 players to start and finish a game, no automatic out.
- Pitchers are allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches within 1 minute between innings.
- All players will bat in one master batting order with free substitution.
- No player shall sit on the bench for more than one inning at a time, unless the player sitting out is sitting out for disciplinary action.
- Dropped 3rd strike played as an out. In 5-6 grade baserunners may still advance.
- 5 runs maximum/inning or 3 outs, whichever occurs first.
- If using a pool player, that player must play in one of the corner outfield positions and bat last in the batting order. Pool players are not allowed in the season ending tournament.
- Bunting is allowed in all divisions, with the exception of a coach pitch.
- Infield Fly will be called in all divisions.

<p><b>Pitching</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> Pitchers are limited to a maximum of three (3) innings/game. No pitcher may pitch more than 2 consecutive innings unless the official game is only 2 innings in length due to time limit, weather, or other circumstances limiting the official game to 2 total innings.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> Pitchers are limited to a maximum of four (4) innings/game. No pitcher may pitch more than 3 consecutive innings unless the official game is only 3 innings in length due to time limit, weather, or other circumstances limiting the official game to 3 total innings.</p>
<p><b>Batting and Advancement</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> There is no advancement by a batter/runner on any play other than a batted ball. Runners/batters may advance on a hit ball until the ball is in control of the pitcher within the pitcher’s circle. (No stealing) No pick-off attempts will be allowed.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> Regular USA Softball Rules</p> <p>Players hit by a pitch will be awarded 1st base, with the exception of a 3-4 player hit by a coach pitched ball. Players do not have to make an attempt to get out of the way of a pitch, however, any pitch that would be considered a strike will be called a strike in the count without advancement.</p>
<p><b>Pitcher/Catcher Lookback Rule</b></p>	<p>Once the pitcher is in control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the base-runner must stop advancement at the base they are advancing to. If the baserunner stops, they must go back to the base they last advanced to. If they immediately do not return to their base, the penalty is an automatic out. The only exception is, in 5-6 grade if a pitcher or catcher makes a throw to the base that the base-runner is returning to, the runner may advance. If a runner stops at a base, the pitcher does not have to physically look back a runner for play to end. There are no pick off attempts in the 3-4 Grade level.</p>
<p><b>3-4 Grade Coach Pitch Rule &amp; Defensive Coach</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade Only!</b> After a normal pitch count and a player is “walked”, the coach will come out to pitch to the player up to bat. The coach must pitch within the pitching circle; strike count from the pitcher carries over to coach pitch. <b><u>Every coach pitch is considered a strike.</u></b> Any 3-strike combination and the batter is out. The only exception is on a 3rd strike foul ball, in that case, the batter keeps their at-bat. The player pitcher must have both feet in the pitcher’s circle to one side or the other of the coach pitching.</p>

	<p>To speed up the game and allow for more innings, a defensive coach will stand near the backstop to help retrieve balls that get past the catcher.</p>
<b>Weather Related Issues</b>	<p>If a game is shortened due to weather, lighting, or other circumstances, an official game can be called after:</p> <p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> 2 complete innings of play.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> 3 complete innings of play.</p>
<b>Sportsmanship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chanting directed at an opposing player at any time is not allowed.</li><li>• The home plate umpire is in control of the game and playing area. The umpire has the right to eject any coach, player or fan that is acting in an inappropriate manner.</li></ul>

Revised April 2024