

Liberty Hill Youth League (LHYL) Softball

General and Age Specific Rules

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We follow the NFHS Rules: You can download the [rule book](#) following these directions.

There will be zero tolerance if a Liberty Hill Youth League by law, policy, or rule is violated at any complex utilized by Softball including tournament locations. Any player, manager, coach, or fan ejected from a game, must leave the facility immediately and will serve a minimum additional one game suspension. During the suspension, the ejected person may not be at the ballpark for practices, games, or events associated with Liberty Hill Youth League.

Section 1: Practice Expectations

1. Coaches are responsible for cleaning up their dugouts after games, raking around plates/bases, and turning on/off lights, locking bathrooms, locking gates, and emptying trash.
2. Coaches will remain with any player that has not been picked up after a practice or game.
3. Coaches are to utilize all listed practice time. If the head coach is unable to coach, an assistant coach needs to step in.

Section 2: Game Rules

1. There are no formal protests allowed for umpire calls made; any rule issues must be addressed on the field before play continues.
2. Home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook. Teams should confirm runs scored each inning to avoid any controversy. However, each team is expected to keep a scorebook for all games.
3. For games, the Home team is responsible for lining the field and the Visiting Team is responsible for turning on/off lights. Both teams are responsible for cleaning up their dugout, removing trash, raking around bases and home plate, and locking gates and bathrooms.
4. The Home Team is responsible for entering the score into SportsEngine before the end of the day of the game.
5. All games will be played as scheduled unless postponed by inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. Such postponed games will be rescheduled. Failure by either team to play the makeup game as rescheduled will constitute a forfeit, unless postponed by inclement weather or unplayable field conditions, in which process will be repeated.
6. No infield warmup after 1st inning. 5 Warm up pitches 1st Inning. 3 pitches each inning after.
7. No Time Outs can be taken in the last 5 minutes of the game.
8. Limit the amount of time to 1-2 minutes to communicate with your team between coming off the field and going onto the field. The 1st infraction will result in a warning from the umpire and the 2nd infraction will be reported to the commissioner from the umpire.
9. Teams must bat the entire roster during the rec fall and spring season including any tournaments that the league sponsors.
10. There are open defensive substitutions except for pitching in 10U, 12U, and 14U. Players arriving late can be added to the bottom of the order. You must notify the other team and umpire at the beginning of the game if this is a possibility).
11. There are technically no substitute players if a batter is injured and cannot finish their at-bat. Rather than the player being called out, the next batter can assume the injured player's at-bat; however, the injured player cannot return to the game at a later time.
12. Metal cleats are not allowed.
13. Bunting is only allowed in 10U, 12U, and 14U.
14. In 6U, no sliding allowed. In 8U, feet first sliding is only allowed. In 10U, feet first into the bag and

diving head first back to the bag is allowed. In 12U and 14U, no restrictions except for diving head first into first base.

15. Runners should avoid contact; intentional contact or malicious contact in the umpire's opinion can lead to player being called out and/or removed or ejected from the game.
16. Throwing the bat will result in 1 warning per player, 2nd occurrence will result in the batter being called out.
17. Scores do not revert back to previous innings if time expires; the inning is completed; home team only bats if it is behind. All runs scored when the umpire calls the ball game are recorded even if the game ends in the middle of an inning.
18. Pool Players

To help prevent forfeits and make sure games can still be played, LHYL allows the use of pool players under the following conditions:

- a. A pool player must be a **currently registered LHYL softball player** for the season.
- b. The player must be in the **same age division or younger**—never from a higher division.
- c. Pool players are placed in the **outfield only** and must bat last in the lineup. They may not play infield or pitch.
- d. No “protected players” may be used as pool players.
- e. Pool players are never to be used to gain a competitive advantage—only to ensure a game can be played.
- f. A team may use **no more than two (2) pool players** in a game. If more than two are used, the game may be played but the final score will be recorded as a forfeit.
- g. Teams may only pool enough players to reach a roster of **up to nine (9)** for 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U divisions.
- h. The **head coach** must only contact their division commissioner as soon as possible if a pool player is needed to make the request. Once approved by the division commissioner, communication will be made between the primary head coach and pool player's guardian.
- i. The commissioner will reach out to coaches within that division to coordinate.
- j. The head coach must inform the **opposing team's coach at the plate meeting** and record the pool player's name on the lineup card.
- k. The pool player must wear their **current team jersey**.
- l. Pool players cannot practice with the team they are helping.
- m. Pool players may not be taken from a team that has a game immediately following. A player cannot miss their own team's playing time to serve as a pool player.

The heart of this rule is simple: we want games to be played, not forfeited, while keeping play fair and balanced for everyone.

Section 3: Age Group Rules

1. Games Time Limits:

- a. LHYL Softball 6U Division: 60 Minutes

***no new inning after 50 minutes or if the score is mathematically not able to catch up

- b. LHYL Softball 8U Division: 60 Minutes

***no new inning after 55 minutes or if the score is mathematically not able to catch up

- c. LHYL Softball 10U Division: 75 Minutes

- d. LHYL Softball 12U Division: 75 Minutes

- e. LHYL Softball 14U Division: 75 Minutes

***no new inning after 70 minutes or if the score is mathematically not able to catch up

Note: A forfeited game shall be decided by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault and the score will be recorded 7-0 if game did not start, if game started and/or runs scored the not at fault team will be awarded 1 more run than at fault team and will be awarded the win.

2. Pitching Distance.

- a. LHYL Softball 6U Division (T-Ball): 40'

- b. LHYL Softball 8U Division (Coach Pitch): 40'

- c. LHYL Softball 10U Division: 35'

- d. LHYL Softball 12U Division: 40'

- e. LHYL Softball 14U Division: 43'

3. Base Distance.

- a. LHYL Softball 6U Division: 55'

- b. LHYL Softball 8U Division: 55'

- c. LHYL Softball 10U Division: 60'

- d. LHYL Softball 12U Division: 60'

- e. LHYL Softball 14U Division: 60'

4. Runs Per Inning:

- a. LHYL Softball 6U Division: 5 runs per half inning

- b. LHYL Softball 8U Division: 5 runs per half inning

- c. LHYL Softball 10U Division: 5 runs per half inning

- d. LHYL Softball 12U Division: 6 runs per half inning

- e. LHYL Softball 14U Division: 6 runs per half inning

5. Age Requirements

- a. LHYL Softball 6U Division 6 years and younger Age as of September 1.
- b. LHYL Softball 8U Division 8 years and younger Age as of September 1.
- c. LHYL Softball 10U Division 10 years and younger Age as of September 1.
- d. LHYL Softball 12U Division 12 years and younger Age as of September 1.
- e. LHYL Softball 14U Division 14 years and younger Age as of September 1.

Note: *If a player is 9 years old on September 1st, 2024, the player will be in the 10U age group for the 2025 Spring, All-Stars (when applicable), and Fall 2026 season. If a player is 8 years old on September 1st, 2024, player will be eligible to play in the 8U age group for the 2025 Spring, All-Stars (when applicable), and Fall 2025 season.*

Note: *Age 5 is the minimum age as of September 1st for players in LHYL 6U Division.*

Note: *Players are allowed to advance in age groups based on VP of Softball and Division Commissioner's **APPROVAL** and the players Parent/Guardian agreement.*

6. 6U T-Ball

- a. Game ends at 60 minutes from the start of the game. No new inning after 50 minutes.
- b. Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to play at the scheduled game time. Up to two pool players may be used to get to **9 players** (see Pool Player rules). No outs will be recorded due to lack of players in the 10th spot. If a team has only 8 players, they may be positioned in the field without a catcher. If a team cannot field 8 players, the game will be recorded as a forfeit. However, every effort should be made to play the game, including teams sharing players and/or additional pool players being added.
- c. If a team starts with more than 10 batters and loses a player, no out will be recorded.
- d. A batted ball must pass the 10-foot arch in front of home plate. If the batted ball does not pass the 10-foot arch, it will be called foul.
- e. A batter must have both feet in the box when hitting the ball.
- f. Time should be called by the umpire when the ball is in the possession of an infielder and/or the lead runner hesitates; this is an umpire's judgment call.
- g. Regulation softballs will be used.
- h. Four outfielders may be used on defense and must be in the grass before the ball is hit.
- i. A pinch runner (last recorded out) may be used for a player that is injured while running the bases.
- j. Any player who is unable to take their official at-bat will be out for the remainder of the game. No out will be recorded unless the team falls below 8 players, or the player was ejected.
- k. It is the umpire's discretion to allow coaches to stand outside the dugout while their team is on defense.

- l. Two defensive coaches are allowed on the field of play (between the foul lines). They should be in the outfield (no coaches in the infield).
- m. Catchers must wear a helmet with a face guard (a batter's helmet is acceptable). Full catcher's equipment is preferred if available, but not necessary. Catchers should be positioned to minimize the risk of being hit by a thrown bat.
- n. A coach may be at home plate to assist the batter in getting set up at the tee, but the coach may not physically position the batter in such a manner as to direct the hit in a particular direction. The coach cannot physically set the batter to "pull" the ball, etc. The coach may tell the batter where he/she wants the ball to go and if the batter can position herself to hit it there, that is acceptable. The coach may not draw lines or
- o. make marks in the batter's box to indicate to the batter where to place her feet in order to hit the ball in a particular direction. The batters' feet must be completely within the batters' box at the time the ball is contacted. If a batter is outside the batter's box at the time of contact, the hit will be recorded as a foul ball and the at-bat will continue.
- p. In the fall, a coach may be at the plate to put the ball on the tee and help assist the players. In the spring, halfway through the season, the coach will not be allowed at the plate.
- q. A legal tee is currently defined as one that can be purchased at Sporting Goods stores. Hand-made or altered tees are not legal. The tee must be placed in a position that would naturally align the ball directly over home plate.
- r. Players hit off a tee – no pitching to players during a game.
- s. No player can sit 2 consecutive innings unless due to injury, disability, mutual agreement with player and coach, or a discipline issue. Managers should notify the other team and parent if this is in effect.
- t. All players must play at least 1 inning in the infield in each game. If a player does not get an opportunity to play the infield due to lack of time, then that player must play 2 innings in the infield at the next game, unless there are safety concerns with that player taking an infield position. If there is a safety concern, the parent and opposing team manager must be notified. Catcher is considered infield.
- u. Proper throwing technique, the basic fundamentals of throwing the ball to first will be enforced, players will not roll the ball to first or spike the ball down to first.
- v. Managers are to use a constant batting order through the season to ensure equitable batting opportunities for all players. This means that when a game concludes, the next player who would have batted will be the first batter in the lineup for the next game. The official scorebook (or team scorebook) can aid coaches in following this rule. Again, this is in effect to develop all players equally.
- w. Pitchers must have two feet on the pitching rubber before the ball is hit.
- x. Players must make a correct throw to first base.

7. 8U Coach Pitch

- a. No new inning to start after 55 minutes.
- b. Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to play at the scheduled game time. Up to two pool players may be used to reach 9 players (see Pool Player rules). Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the line-up (notify umpire). No outs will be recorded due to lack of players in the 10th spot. If a team has only 8 players, they may be positioned in the field without a catcher. If a team cannot field 8 players, the game will be recorded as a forfeit. However, every effort should be made to play the game, including teams sharing players and/or additional pool players being added.
- c. If a team starts with more than 10 batters and loses a player, no out will be recorded unless the team falls below 9 players, or the player was ejected.
- d. Batters receive 4 pitches or three strikes per at bat. If a foul ball occurs on the 4th pitch, the batter will continue to hit until the ball is put in play, or the batter strikes out. No limits on foul balls.
- e. Any batted ball hitting the coach-pitcher will be ruled a foul ball.
- f. A pitched ball is dead when it hits the ground. Batter cannot hit the ball that first touches the ground. Each batter is allowed four pitches. The fourth pitch unless hit fair or foul will be an out.
- g. The coach-pitcher is a "pitching machine" and cannot speak to anyone nor coach in any way from the field. Coaching from the field will result in a warning from the umpire; a second occurrence will result in the removal of that coach-pitcher. The coach-pitcher may communicate with the third or first base coach and that is it.
- h. A coach-pitcher cannot be voluntarily changed in the middle of an inning.
- i. Time should be called by the umpire when the ball is in the possession of an infielder and/or the lead runner hesitates; this is an umpire's judgment call.
- j. A pinch runner (last recorded out) may be used for a player who is injured while running the bases.
- k. Any player who is unable to take their official at-bat will be out for the remainder of the game. No out will be recorded unless the team falls below 9 players, or the player was ejected.
- l. Four outfielders may be used on defense; players cannot be stacked (no Rover) and must be in the grass.
- m. It is the umpire's discretion to allow coaches to stand outside the dugout.
- n. For the first 2 weeks of the season, 2 defensive coaches are allowed on the field of play (between the foul lines). They should be in the outfield (no coaches in the infield). After the first 2 weeks of the season, there are no defensive coaches allowed on the field of play. The specific date will be communicated to the head coaches.
- q. Catchers must be in full gear (mask, chest protector, shin guards). Catcher's mitt is optional; players may use a regulation glove.

- r. No player can sit 2 consecutive innings unless due to injury, disability, mutual agreement with player and coach, or a discipline issue. Managers should notify the other team and parent if this is in effect.
- s. All players must play at least 1 inning in the infield in each game. If a player does not get an opportunity to play the infield due to lack of time, then that player must play 2 innings in the infield at the next game, unless there are safety concerns with that player taking an infield position. If there is a safety concern, the parent and opposing team manager must be notified. Catcher is considered infield.
- t. Pitchers must be behind the lines that extend from the pitching rubber.

8. 10U Kid Pitch

- a. No new inning to start after 70 minutes.
- b. Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to play at the scheduled game time. An out will be recorded for the 9th position in the batting order if it is not filled. Players arriving late can be added to the bottom of the line-up (notify umpire). Up to two pool players may be used (see Pool Player rules).
 - If a team cannot field 8 players, the game will be recorded as a forfeit. However, every effort should be made to play the game, including teams sharing players and/or additional pool players being added.
- c. If a team starts with more than 10 batters and loses a player, no out will be recorded unless the team falls below 9 players, or the player was ejected.
- d. Catchers must be in full gear (mask, chest protector, shin guards). Catcher's mitt is recommended; players may use a regulation glove if no catcher's mitt is available.
- e. Coaches may call 'timeout' to visit the pitcher's mound one time per 1/2 inning without making a pitching change. Upon the 2nd coach's visit to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be changed. The catcher, or any other infield position player, may visit the pitcher's mound without limit. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury and the umpire has called time.
- f. Any player who is unable to take their official at-bat will be out for the remainder of the game. No out will be recorded unless the team falls below 9 players, or the player was ejected.
- g. It is the umpire's discretion to allow coaches to stand outside the dugout. No defensive coaches on the field of play.
- h. No player can sit 2 consecutive innings unless due to injury, disability, mutual agreement with player and coach, or a discipline issue. Managers should notify the other team and parent if this is in effect.
- i. OPEN bases (stealing) is allowed once the pitcher has released the ball.
- j. If a ball slips from the pitcher's hand, no pitch will be called on the first occurrence. This is when a player initiates her motion and loses the ball in the declaration part of the pitch, falling out of the hand going backwards. One warning will be given in a game, the runners

are not allowed to leave the base; each additional no-pitch will count as a ball, and the runners may advance at their own risk.

- l. The dropped 3rd strike rule is in effect.
- m. Advancing to home between pitches and during other situations is ALLOWED.
- n. Once the pitcher possesses the ball in the pitcher's circle, base runners must immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. Failure to immediately advance or return to a base will result in the runner being called out; changing direction after starting advance/return will result in an out unless the pitcher makes a "Softball" motion with the ball.
- o. Legal Delivery Points of Emphasis:
 1. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with, but not off the side of, the pitcher's plate.
 2. Pitcher may use any windup desired, providing:
 - i. Player does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
 - ii. Player does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in the pitching position, she removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing, and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
 - iii. Player does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
 - iv. Player does not make two revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop her arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.
 - v. Player does not continue the wind up after taking the forward step, which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- p. Illegal pitches. A pitcher stopping their pitching motion is an illegal pitch. Types of illegal pitches; preliminaries (appearing to take signal, hands separated, on plate) and or an illegal delivery.

An illegal pitch results in:

- i. A delayed dead ball
- ii. If a runner hits and all runners advance 1 base, the illegal pitch is nullified.
- iii. If not, the offensive coach has the option of taking the result of the play or the penalty, ball on the batter and all runners advance 1 base.

9. 12U/14U Softball (10U rules plus the following)
 - a. Catcher's mitt is required.

Note: Teams may travel to other community ballparks for games. Local rules will supersede LHYL rules unless negotiated and agreed to by the team coaches and umpires prior to the start of the game.

Section 4: Determining Final Standings

1. The LHYL Division Champion will be based on LHYL Division games played against each LHYL Division team.
 - a. In the event of a tie, the LHYL Division Champion will be determined as follows:
 - i. Head to Head; win versus loss
 1. Regular Season scheduled games
 2. Tournament Bracket games
 - ii. Runs Allowed in Head to Head games
 - iii. Runs Scored in Head to Head games
 - iv. Least amount of runs allowed overall in regular season against each LHYL Division team
 - v. Coin Flip
 - vi. Teams are responsible for cleaning up their dugouts after games, raking around plates/bases, and turning on/off lights, locking bathrooms, locking gates, and emptying trash.

Section 5: Equipment

1. One box of game balls will be provided to each team for the season. It is the head coach's responsibility to manage the game balls for the season. Each team should provide one new and one slightly used ball for their game.
2. Regulation Leather Fastpitch Softballs will be used. 6U, 8U, 10U will use 11" Softballs. 12U and 14U will use 12" Softballs. Fielding Masks: 6U, 8U, 10U are required to wear a protective fielder's mask regardless of the position they are playing on the field. 12U, and 14U infielders are required to wear a protective fielder's mask and outfielders have the option to not wear a fielder's mask.

Section 6: Tournament

1. Each team will be playing in one league sponsored softball tournament each season in the surrounding area, if needed. The tournament's dates will be listed in SportsEngine and you could possibly play games on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of that weekend. Divisions with enough teams will hold their own tournaments at LHYL.