



# REC SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES

## FALL 2025 & SPRING 2026

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### General Rules

- Time Limits
  - Pool Games
    - 8U, 10u, 12U & 15U - 65 minutes, FINISH THE BATTER
    - Games can end in a tie
  - Bracket Games
    - 8U – 70 minutes, finish the inning unless team is trailing by 6 or more runs.
    - 10U, 12U & 15U – 75 minutes, finish the inning unless team is trailing by 6 or more runs
    - International tie breaker will be used in bracket games - the last batter from the previous inning will be placed on second base with 0 outs.
- Maximum of 5 runs per inning in all games (pool and bracket)
- Coin flip will determine home team for pool play for 8U, 10U and 12U. In bracket play, the higher seed will be home team.
- Home team will be responsible for keeping the official scorebook and will be required to go to report the score to the Tournament Director's table.
- Visiting team will be responsible for running the scoreboard.
- Lineups must be given to the umpire and opposing coach prior to or at the home plate meeting
- Mercy rule is 12 runs after 3 complete innings or 8 runs after 4 complete innings



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- Batting Order / Lineup
  - Continuous batting order
  - Must have a minimum of nine (9) players to start and finish the game without penalty. If the team has eight (8) players, then the team will incur an automatic out for the 9th batter position.
  - Courtesy runner for pitcher and catcher will be the last batted out (unless the last batted out was either the listed pitcher or catcher, then the previous batted out)
  - Incorrect batting order:
    - If the error is discovered before a complete at bat, the correct batter may assume the pitch count with no penalty.
    - If the error is discovered after a completed at bat, but prior to the first pitch to the next batter, an out is declared.
- Tie Breaker Info:
  - W-L
  - Run Differential for W-L
  - Runs Against
  - Runs For
  - Coin Toss



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### 8u Specific Rules

- **Pitching** – Coach-pitch only, no player pitch
  - USA Softball fastpitch rules are in effect
  - Pitching will be done underhand by coach from 30 feet.
  - The Coach Pitcher must have both feet in contact with the pitcher's rubber prior to the delivery.
  - A batter shall be declared out after failing to hit a fair ball after six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter will continue his/her at-bat. Foul balls are counted as strikes, BUT an at bat cannot end on a foul ball unless it is caught in the air. There are no foul outs, unless caught.
  - No Walks allowed.
  - On a ball in play, if the Coach Pitcher fails to position himself so that the fielders can play the ball, the ball is dead, the pitch counts as one of the six pitches and no runner shall advance. If a batted ball hits the Coach Pitcher, then the ball becomes dead and no pitch is declared.
  - The Coach-Pitcher and the Backstop Coach cannot participate or direct their team in any way while on offense. However, the Coach-Pitcher may coach the batter in the batter's box before the ball is pitched.
  - The Coach Pitcher will always remain in the pitcher's circle, unless the ball is batted into fair play. At that time, the coach will leave fair territory until the play is called dead.
  - The player in the pitching position must have at least one foot within the pitching circle while the coach is pitching.
- **Backstop Coach**
  - Defensive team shall provide a backstop coach to assist the catcher in returning balls to the pitcher to speed up game pace. Backstop coach may not coach or instruct any player for any reason, nor is he/she allowed to discuss plays/calls with the umpire.



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- **Batter/Runner**
  - There will be tight bases and no stealing. Runners cannot leave the base until the ball has been put into play.
  - Runners on third can only score on plays resulting from a hit ball. They cannot score on an overthrow.
  - No bunting
  - Infield fly rule is not in effect
  - **Stopping Play** - Play is stopped when the pitcher or any infielder has control of the ball inside the base path in the infield.
    - If the runner(s) are advancing to a base when the pitcher or infielder gains control of the ball inside the base path in the infield.
      - The runner(s) may continue to the base at her own risk.
      - The runner(s) may not advance past the base unless the defense makes an attempt to put-out a runner
  - **Advancing on an Overthrow** - On an overthrow to a base, a runner may advance to the next base at her own risk.
    - On an overthrow of an infield play, a runner may attempt, at risk, to advance one additional base. If the resulting play is another overthrow, the runner must stop at the base they were going to. Runners on third must be hit in. They cannot score on an overthrow of an infield play. If an outfielder throws the ball to a cut-off man (infielder) who in turn makes an overthrow, this is deemed a continuation of an outfield play, and the runner may continue to advance at their own risk.
  - If a runner is on 1st base, the runner can advance to 3B (at the runner's own risk) on an infield hit. The runner may not advance to Home on an infield hit.
  - If the runner is on 1st base or 2nd base, the ball hit must be hit in the outfield to be able to score by running to Home (at the runner's risk).
  - A batter shall be declared out after failing to hit a fair ball after six (6) coach pitches or three (3) swinging strikes. If the 6th pitch is fouled off, the batter will continue his/her at-bat. Foul balls are counted as strikes, BUT an at bat cannot end on a foul ball unless it is caught in the air. There are no foul outs, unless caught.
- Teams will play 10 players on defense.



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### 10u Specific Rules

- **Pitching** – Modified player-pitch
  - USA Softball fastpitch rules are in effect
  - Pitching distance is 35 feet
  - Player will pitch unless four balls are called by the umpire.
  - After four balls, an offensive coach will take over the “strike” pitch count.
    - If the player/pitcher has made no strikes, the coach gets three pitches regardless of accuracy – if the player/pitcher has made any strikes, the coach gets the remaining one or 2 pitches.
    - No walks are allowed.
  - The coach must pitch underhand from the 35ft. pitching plate.
  - The player/pitcher must have at least one foot inside the pitcher’s circle when the coach delivers a pitch.
  - The batter must hit the ball in play to advance to first base; no base-on-balls will be issued.
  - A batter hit by a pitch of the player/pitcher with an effort to avoid being hit is awarded first base.
    - The batter must make an effort to avoid being hit by the pitch.
  - If three batters in a single inning are awarded first base because they are “hit by pitch” from the same pitcher, the offending pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the inning. Pitcher may return next inning.
  - If a pitcher is replaced in two innings of the same game for too many “hit by pitch” calls, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the game.
  - If the batter does not put the ball in play, an “out” is called and the next player in the line-up takes their turn at bat.
  - If the batter hits a foul ball on the last pitch, then the batter will get another pitch. The batter cannot be called out on a foul ball that is not caught before hitting the ground.
  - When the ball is put in play by a batter, the coach must immediately exit the playing field without interference.
  - If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher, NO PITCH will be called.
  - If the coach pitcher interferes with any defensive player’s ability to field the ball, NO PITCH will be called.
  - The player/pitcher resumes pitching on the next batter.



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- **Batter/Runner**
  - On a dropped third strike, the batter may not run and is called out.
  - There will be tight bases with stealing. Runners cannot leave base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
  - Base Runners may only steal 1 base per pitch.
  - Stealing is not allowed when a coach is pitching.
  - A runner on third base cannot steal home.
  - Runners starting on third can only score on plays resulting from a batted ball. They cannot score on any overthrow (to a pitcher, or to any base).
  - Play will be stopped when the pitcher has control of the ball inside the circle surrounding the pitching rubber.
  - On overthrows during the play of a batted ball, the runner may advance (at risk) to any base, including home, until the pitcher has control of the ball inside the pitcher's circle, or a 'dead-ball' is called by the umpire.
  - Players cannot advance on an overthrow from the catcher back to the pitcher.
  - Infield fly rule is not in effect.
  - Look-back rule not in effect.
  - Bunting is not allowed when a coach is pitching.
- Teams will play 10 players on defense.



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### 12U Specific Rules

- **Pitching**
  - USA Softball fastpitch rules are in effect.
  - Pitching distance is 40 feet.
  - No more than 1 minute or five pitches are allowed as warm-ups between innings. For excessive warm-up pitches, the pitcher will be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each excessive warm-up pitch thrown.
  - A batter hit by a pitch of the player/pitcher with an effort to avoid being hit is awarded first base.
    - The batter must make an effort to avoid being hit by the pitch.
  - If three batters in a single inning are awarded first base because they are “hit by pitch” from the same pitcher, the offending pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the inning. Pitcher may return next inning.
  - If a pitcher is replaced in two innings of the same game for too many “hit by pitch” calls, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the game.
- **Batter/Runner**
  - Dropped third strike rule is in effect. A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch, which is the third strike. The pitch is considered not cleanly caught if the ball touches the dirt before being caught, or if the ball is dropped after being caught, and not cleanly and clearly possessed by the catcher.
    - The dropped third strike will be ruled as follows: When there are less than two outs, and first base is unoccupied, a dropped third strike is a live ball, and the batter and all base runners may advance at their own discretion. The out is completed/recorded by one of the following:
      - Batter physically tagged out by a defensive player prior to reaching first base.
      - Batter forced out at first base.
    - When there are less than two outs, and first base is occupied prior to the pitch, a dropped third strike is ruled a strikeout, and all base runners may advance at their own discretion.
    - When there are two outs, a dropped third strike is a live ball regardless of whether first base is occupied or unoccupied. The out/inning is completed/recorded by one of the following:



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- Batter physically tagged out by a defensive player, prior to reaching first base.
- Batter forced out at first base.
  - If bases are loaded, the out/inning can also be completed by a force out at home plate. Player possessing the ball simply steps on home plate before the runner on third reaches home plate.
- The “Look Back” rule is in effect. If a runner is between bases while the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner must immediately choose to advance or return to base. Failure to do so will result in an out.
- The “infield fly” rule is in effect.
- There will be tight bases and stealing. A runner cannot leave a base to attempt a steal until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
- If a runner is obstructed by a fielder without the ball, the runner is awarded the next base. No fake tags.
- A fielder cannot catch a ball with any part of the uniform or equipment detached from its proper place on their person.
- Courtesy Runners
  - Pitcher and catcher only – identified on lineup card exchanged during coaches meeting
  - Courtesy runner for pitcher and catcher (last batted out, unless the last batted out was either the listed pitcher or catcher, then the previous batted out).
- Teams will play with 9 defensive players (knowing some rec leagues play with 10).



# REC SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES

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### 15U Specific Rules

- **Pitching**
  - USA Softball fastpitch rules are in effect
  - Pitching distance is 43 feet
  - No more than 1 minute or five pitches are allowed as warm-ups between innings. For excessive warm-up pitches, the pitcher will be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each excessive warm-up pitch thrown.
  - A batter hit by a pitch of the player/pitcher with an effort to avoid being hit is awarded first base.
    - The batter must make an effort to avoid being hit by the pitch.
  - If three batters in a single inning are awarded first base because they are “hit by pitch” from the same pitcher, the offending pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the inning. Pitcher may return next inning.
  - If a pitcher is replaced in two innings of the same game for too many “hit by pitch” calls, the pitcher must be replaced for the remainder of the game.
- **Batter/Runner**
  - Dropped third strike rule is in effect. A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch, which is the third strike. The pitch is considered not cleanly caught if the ball touches the dirt before being caught, or if the ball is dropped after being caught, and not cleanly and clearly possessed by the catcher.
    - The dropped third strike will be ruled as follows: When there are less than two outs, and first base is unoccupied, a dropped third strike is a live ball, and the batter and all base runners may advance at their own discretion. The out is completed/recorded by one of the following:
      - Batter physically tagged out by a defensive player prior to reaching first base.
      - Batter forced out at first base.
    - When there are less than two outs, and first base is occupied prior to the pitch, a dropped third strike is ruled a strikeout, and all base runners may advance at their own discretion.
    - When there are two outs, a dropped third strike is a live ball regardless of whether first base is occupied or unoccupied. The out/inning is completed/recorded by one of the following:



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- Batter physically tagged out by a defensive player, prior to reaching first base.
- Batter forced out at first base.
  - If bases are loaded, the out/inning can also be completed by a force out at home plate. Player possessing the ball simply steps on home plate before the runner on third reaches home plate.
- The “Look Back” rule is in effect. If a runner is between bases while the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner must immediately choose to advance or return to base. Failure to do so will result in an out.
- The “infield fly” rule is in effect.
- There will be tight bases and stealing. A runner cannot leave a base to attempt a steal until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
- If a runner is obstructed by a fielder without the ball, the runner is awarded the next base. No fake tags.
- A fielder cannot catch a ball with any part of the uniform or equipment detached from its proper place on their person.
- Courtesy Runners
  - Pitcher and catcher only – identified on lineup card exchanged during coaches meeting
  - Courtesy runner for pitcher and catcher (last batted out, unless the last batted out was either the listed pitcher or catcher, then the previous batted out).
- Teams will play with 9 defensive players.