

**Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources
10U, 12U, 14U and 18U Softball - Rules Summary**

THIS IS A RULES SUMMARY

This does not include all of the rules for the leagues.

Please review the rules in the notebook at the scorer's table when necessary. Thank you.

National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules will be used unless otherwise stated in the Cary youth softball league rules in the handbook.

SOFTBALL BATS

Prior to each game, all bats for both teams must be checked. NFHS utilizes USA Softball (USA) certification standards. All bats must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark, and not be included in the USA Softball non-approved bat list.

Prior to each game each team is guaranteed 5 minutes of on-field warmup. Visiting team will take infield no later than 15 minutes prior to the game. Home team may take infield no later than 10 minutes prior to the game.

5 minutes prior to the game will be for coach meeting and pitcher warmups. Umpires will meet with both coaches for a pre-game meeting at home plate. Cary league rules should be reviewed along with any other pertinent issues. Remind coaches to encourage their players to hustle on and off the field between innings.

(Before game) Umpires must sign the game results sheets at the scorer's table. Get game balls from scorekeeper.

Home team occupies 1st base dugout.

The strike zone should be appropriate to the skill level of the pitching in the league.

- **Regulation Game | Softball**

- 10U – Shall consist of 6 innings or 1 hour 40 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 40 minutes.
- 12U, 14U, 18U – Shall consist of 7 innings or 1 hour 45 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin after 1 hour 45 minutes of play.
- *NEW* Regular season games may end in a tie.

- **Run Limits**

- 10U – Limit of 4 runs per inning for the entire game.
- 12U – Limit of 5 runs per inning in the first 4 innings.
- 14U & 18U – No limit to number of runs for the entire game.

- **Mercy Rule - All age groups**

- 10 run rule applies after 4 ½ or 5 innings of play.
- 15 run rule applies after 2 ½ or 3 innings of play.

- **Pitching Restrictions**

- National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules will be followed. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backwards may end before or after the hands come together (per high school rules).
- Pitchers may not pitch more than 4 innings in one game.
- The pitcher must be removed from the pitching position on the 4th defensive charged conference within a 7-inning game. Once the pitcher is removed from the pitcher position due to the 4th charged conference, they are not permitted to pitch again in the same game.
- If a pitcher is removed from the pitcher position for any other reason other than the 4th charged defensive conference, the pitcher may return to pitch one time in the same game but may not return to pitch in the same inning.

- **Stealing**
 - **10U** – Base runners cannot leave the base until the ball reaches home plate (1 warning per team). Base runners may not advance home on a passed ball/wild pitch or overthrow of the return from the catcher to the pitcher. Base runners may advance home if the defense is making a play on a base runner.
 - **12U** – Base runners cannot leave the base until the ball reaches home plate (1 warning per team). runner. Base runners are allowed to steal home
 - **14U & 18U** - Base runner may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- **Dropped 3rd Strike**
 - **10U & 12U** – The batter is out on the 3rd strike whether or not the ball is caught by the catcher.
 - **14U & 18U** – Dropped 3rd strike rule is in effect (USA/ASA Softball rule).
- **Infield Fly Rule**
 - **10 & 12U** – Infield fly rule is not in effect.
 - **14U & 18U** – Infield fly rule is in effect.
- **Time-Outs**
 - One offensive time out per inning.
 - On timeouts, no more than 3 players may “huddle” at the mound.
- **10U Rules**
 - **10U is a NO-WALK league**
 - There are no walks during the entire game.
 - In all innings pitchers will pitch as normal to batters.
 - If a pitcher strikes out the batter, the batter will be out.
 - If the pitcher walks the batter, The batter is NOT awarded the base, but the ball is still live until time is called. The coach for the batter will soft toss 3 times to the batter (from near home plate).
 - If the batter fails to hit the ball in play after 3 soft toss attempts, the batter will be out.
 - Note: A foul ball on the 3rd (or last) soft-toss will result in an additional soft-toss.
 - Bunting is not permitted during soft tosses.
 - **Number of Players** – 10U may play an additional outfielder for a total of 10 players on defense.
 - **Overthrow Rule** – The lead runner may not advance past 3rd base on an overthrow, or series of overthrows. Any runner advancing after an overthrow does so at their own risk.
 - **Exceptions:**
 - If the lead runner is already past 3rd base before the first overthrow, then they may advance home at their own risk.
 - If the first overthrow is made at 3rd base, the runner may advance home at their own risk. Subsequent runners in this scenario may not advance past 3rd base.
- **Courtesy Runner -**
 - **18U** – An optional courtesy runner may be used for the catcher or pitcher at any time.
 - **14U** – May be used with two outs.
 - **12U** – May be used with 2 outs, or after 3 runs have been made.
 - **10U** – May be used with 2 outs, or after 3 runs have been made in the first 5 innings.
 - The player who made the last out will run for the catcher or pitcher. In the event the last out is the pitcher or catcher of record (previous inning), then the runner will be the out prior.
- **MISCELLANEOUS**
 - If the defensive team wants to walk the batter, the pitcher must pitch to the batter.
 - Continuous batting order is used.
 - Metal cleats are not allowed.
 - The official game time is kept on the scoreboard or by the umpire if no scorekeeper.
 - Game time begins on the first pitch of the game.
 - On deck batters are permitted to use the opposing team's on deck circle if desired for safety reasons.
 - Bat boy/bat girls are not allowed.
 - Maximum of 4 adults in the dugout.