

2026 3rd / 4th Cedar Valley League Softball Rules

- Players should be in 3rd or 4th grade at registration.
- No baseball bats allowed. Big barrel bats are allowed.
- 11” softball is required for this age group.
- No metal cleats allowed
- Bases are 60 feet apart; pitchers will pitch from 35 feet.
- Visitors may take the field for warm-ups fifteen minutes prior to game start time, and will warm up for 7.5 minutes to be followed by the home team infield for 7.5 minutes. Games will start at 6:00 PM unless both teams agree to something different prior. All games will be 1 hour and 30 min. Once the time limit is reached, the current batter will finish batting and the game will end. 4 innings is considered a complete game. At the end of 4 innings, if any team leads by 10 runs, the game will end. Home team must bat before darkness unless they are leading. Opposing coaches need to agree on start time at the beginning of the game and final score at end of the game. The umpire will time the game and warn managers of impending end of game.
- Innings are limited to 4 runs per inning, or 3 outs. **Pitch count will be 3 balls and 2 strikes.**
- There may be up to 10 players playing in the field (using four distinct outfielders). At least 8 players are required to start a game; any less is an automatic forfeit of the game unless both coaches agree to reschedule. If a team has 8 players, there is no automatic out for the 9th and 10th batters.
- Cancellations – Home team decides and must call at least 90 minutes prior to scheduled game time. Rain outs to be made up based upon availability as determined by both team’s head coaches. All games need to be made up before July 1st.
- Home team provides one new ball and two other good condition balls.
- Catchers must wear a protective helmet with their facemasks whenever they catch a pitch, including warm up pitches. The batter at the plate and all base runners must wear a batting helmet. ***Face guards and chin straps are strongly recommended!***

Batting

- Batting the entire lineup will be at the coach’s discretion. Open substitutions, but players cannot bat more than once during a rotation.
- No bunting is allowed.
- Base runner must slide to avoid contact with opposing players when played on; otherwise the player may be called out. This is the umpire’s decision. Absolutely no arguing with the umpires on their call of this rule. This is a judgment call for player’s safety.

- Hit by pitch – Batter must make an attempt to avoid the ball and not have been swinging at the ball. Batter can take 1st base if hit by a pitch from a player pitcher.
- Home Plate is closed for passed balls and overthrows. Leading off after the ball leaves the pitchers hand is allowed up to two steps and stealing is only allowed on a passed ball. One base will be allowed on an overthrow on a pick-off attempt.
- A runner can only go one base at a time on an overthrow during a live play. If a player advances more than one base, play will be stopped, and the runner will be returned to the previous base. Award one base if the ball goes into a dead ball area.
- Players cannot steal a base when a coach comes in to finish the pitch count.
- Throwing the bat – first time-team issued a warning – the second time the batter is out and runners can't advance.
- Safety Base Rule: Batter/runner can use the orange part only on their first pass over first base. The fielder uses the white part of the base only. The batter/runner after passing or rounding first base shall return to the white part of the base only. After crossing the orange part of the base the batter/runner can turn right or left as long as they are not making a motion to run to second.

Pitching / Fielding

- With a 3 ball count, the coach will enter to pitch. This is only for the current batter, not the entire inning. Kneeling to pitch is allowed if necessary. The coach is only allowed to finish the count, with a maximum of 2 pitches total. The ump will stay behind the plate when the coach pitches to call balls and strikes. (Ex. Count is 3 balls and 1 strike. If the coach pitches a strike and the batter does not swing, the batter is out.) When the coach is pitching, foul balls are played as normal and do not result in an out. The at bat will continue until the ball is put in play, the batter swings and misses or the coach pitches a strike that the batter does not swing at. This is the only situation where there could be more than 2 pitches thrown at the batter. Runners are not allowed to advance on a passed ball when the coach is pitching.
- Pitchers are limited to 8 warm up pitches at the start of the game or when a new pitcher enters. 5 pitches max between innings for regular pitchers.
- If the player pitcher hits 3 players in any game, player needs to be moved to a different position.
- Strike zone- width of the plate plus one fist inside/outside (from the edge of the white) between the knees and chest of the batter in a standing position.
- No Infield Fly Rule and Dropped 3rd Strike Rule is not in place. Batter is out on a dropped third strike.
- Foul Tips legally caught by the catcher will be an out. Foul tip on strike three caught by catcher is a strike out.
- Defensive player cannot block base path without possession of the ball.

- Catchers on base with two outs may be substituted to speed up the game. The courtesy runner must be the last person to be called out.

Sportsmanship

- Sportsmanship – players, coaches, and fans are expected to display good sportsmanship
- Coaches have the responsibility of controlling abusive fans
- Umpire’s decision on the field is final. Coaches should not argue judgment calls with the umpires
- Umpires have the right to eject players and coaches and may declare a forfeit when appropriate.
- Home teams are required to provide one umpire and are encouraged to provide two umpires, if possible, in order to make sure the game is called as accurately as possible.