



# **South Metro Recreation**

## **Youth Baseball / Softball / T-Ball**

### **League Rules**

Rules and Guidelines (Revised 4/2/2025)

**ALL RULE(S) CHANGES WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW**

- 
- Section 1: General Rules (Pg. 1)**
  - Section 2: Heat Policy/Protests/Uniforms & Equipment (Pg. 2)**
  - Section 3: Sportsmanship Policy/Draft Rules (Pg. 4)**
  - Section 4: T-Ball Rules (Pg. 5)**
  - Section 5: Machine Pitch Baseball Rules (Pg. 5 & 6)**
  - Section 6: Coach Pitch Softball Rules (Pg. 7)**
  - Section 7: 3rd/4th Grade Player Baseball Pitch Rules (Pg. 8)**
  - Section 8: 3rd/4th Grade Player Pitch Softball Rules (Pg. 9)**
  - Section 9: 5th/6th and 7th-9th Player Pitch Baseball Rules (Pg. 10 & 11)**
  - Section 10: 5th/6th and 7th-9th Player Pitch Softball Rules (Pg. 11 & 12)**

The following rules will govern the play in all South Metro Recreational League games.

All Rules and game situations not covered in this set of rules will defer to the official USSSA Baseball and Fast-Pitch Softball Rules. USSSA rules can be found at <https://www.ussabaseball.org/rules-by-laws> (Baseball) or [https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch\\_rules.pdf](https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch_rules.pdf) (Softball)

League Contact Information & Rainout Line

| City          | Contact          | E-Mail                     | Rainout Line             | League Website                         |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Belton        | Jared Benson     | jaredb@beltonparks.org     | (816) 348-3744           | www.teamsideline.com<br>/belton        |
| Grandview     | George Hermanson | ghermanson@grandview.org   | (816) 720-7207           | www.teamsideline.com<br>/grandview     |
| Harrisonville | Alex Slocum      | aslocum@harrisonville.com  | (816) 380-8980<br>EXT. 9 | www.teamsideline.com<br>/harrisonville |
| Pleasant Hill | Dharma Gilsdorf  | dgilsdorf@pleasanthill.com | (816) 295-9855           | www.teamsideline.com<br>/pleasanthill  |
| Raymore       | Nick Cook        | ncook@raymore.com          | (816) 919-6353           | www.teamsideline.com<br>/raymore       |



## Section 1:

### General Rules

- Rain-out lines are posted on the first page of these rules. It is the responsibility of the coaches and parents to contact the rain-out line for the community where the game is being played. Rain-out lines are typically updated at 4:00 PM each day.
- Delays due to lightning, rain, or inclement weather will be called by the umpire and league officials.
  - Incomplete games called due to inclement weather, field conditions, time limits, or park curfew by a league official or representative shall be rescheduled at the discretion of league officials.
- No game will start 15 minutes after scheduled time unless delay is caused by an umpire, field conflict, or weather conditions. Any team not ready to start 15 minutes after scheduled time will forfeit the game.
  - Official game time will start at the first warm-up pitch or when the umpire announces the game time. Games that finish due to time, rather than completed innings will still be considered a full and complete game.
    - Only managers, coaches, and team members can request a time-out.
  - Games that are canceled due to inclement weather before 3 ½ innings, or before 1 hour, will be rescheduled and start over.
  - Games that are canceled due to inclement weather after 3 ½ innings, or after 1 hour, will not be rescheduled and scores will be recorded from that point in the game.
- Both teams involved in the game will clean out their receptive dugout and place all trash in provided trash receptacles at the conclusion of their scheduled game.
- One out constitutes 1/3 of an inning.
- All bats should have a USSSA stamp. Umpires and league officials will determine if a bat is not legal. If an illegal bat is found in use, the bat will be removed from play and the game will continue.
- Any ball hit bouncing over, going through, around, or under the fence in fair territory is a ground rule double.
- Whenever a tag play is evident, runners must slide **OR** seek to avoid contact with the fielder. Malicious contact shall suspend all obstruction penalties. Malicious contact by the runner and obstruction by a fielder are both judgement calls to be made by the umpires.
- No player can be added to a team roster by a coach after teams are set. League officials must authorize the addition of any player to a team and they will notify all communities involved in share-play games.
- In all divisions, the batting order will consist of all eligible players for game play at the start of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the end of the batting order. All players on the roster before returning to the top of the order.
- Any player not filling their spot in the batting order will constitute an out, unless the player has been permanently removed from the game due to injury.
- Pitchers will receive no less than 3 warm up pitches between innings for returning pitchers and 5 warm up pitches for new pitchers. More warm up pitches may be allowed at the umpire's discretion.
- A team may start and finish the game with 7 players.
  - Teams that know they will not be able to field 7 players to start a game may borrow players from other teams in the division, or immediate younger division. League officials, and opposing coaches, must approve the borrowed player(s) prior to the start of the game.
  - The team is only allowed to borrow the number of players to fully field the defensive players (9 or 10 total players depending on division).
  - Borrowed players are not allowed to pitch or play catcher, and they must assume the last positions of the batting order.
  - Borrowing players is not intended to strengthen a team, but rather to avoid forfeits and late season reschedules.
  - Borrowed players must wear the team uniform that has been assigned by the league officials. They are not allowed to wear the uniform of the team that they are filling in for.
- Team substitutions are not allowed during tournament games.
- The use for electronic devices will not be allowed on the field of play during the play of the game.
- Teams will provide line up cards to the opposing coaches (1/2 Grade and up).
- Mercy Rule:

| Run Differential | Inning          |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 15 runs          | After 3 innings |
| 12 runs          | After 4 innings |
| 10 runs          | After 5 innings |
| 8 runs           | After 6 innings |

- Tie Games: At the end of regulation play, if the game is tied, the game will end in a tie.
- Teams are permitted to have a maximum of 3 coaches in the dugout during games, regardless of the number of assistant coaches that help during practices.

**All judgement rulings made by the umpire are final. Coaches may ask for time to discuss the rule with an umpire or ask to speak with the Umpire in Charge (UIC). All rulings by the league officials and UIC's are final.**

## **Section 2:**

### **Heat Policy**

The South Metro Sports Group has implemented the following guidelines to deal with extreme heat at youth baseball, softball, t-ball games and practices. It is designed to provide participants with a standard of safe play in situations of extreme heat.

The two values that will be considered when modifying or canceling games are air temperature and relative humidity. The combination of these two elements reflects the heat index. We will rely on the heat index reading that is updated hourly by the National Weather Service from Kansas City/Pleasant Hill, MO.

The South Metro Sports Group will follow the same guidelines as the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA). These guidelines are followed by area school districts for their activities as well.

If the heat index is between 95 and 104 degrees, practices and games will be altered. This can include, but not limited to, at the discretion of league officials:

- Limiting players to not play the position of catcher more than 2 innings consecutively
- Shortening game times, or delaying the start of games
- Requiring longer breaks between innings to properly hydrate

If the heat index is 105 degrees or higher, practices and games will be postponed and/or rescheduled.

Please note that the heat index reading used can change or be different depending on the location of your game or practice in the South Metro area. League officials will take into consideration travel time and projected game-time heat index values to make the best possible determination for safe playing conditions.

### **Protests**

Officials' decisions in all matters are final. There shall be no protests except in cases of violation of the minimum playing requirements. Intent to protest must be noted in the scorebook by an umpire at the request of the coach within five minutes of the conclusion of the game. The protest must then be reported to league officials in the community that the game was played by the next working day. A report must be made by phone call or e-mail.

### **Uniforms and Equipment**

- Required uniform consists of a baseball cap or softball visor (visor is optional), team shirt/jersey with a number and baseball pants or softball pants/shorts.
- Batters and base runners are required to wear approved head protection. Helmets with ear covering must be worn at all practices and games. Softball helmets shall have face masks in all divisions of player pitch.
- Tennis shoes or athletic cleats should be worn by all players.
  - Metal cleats are only allowed in the 7th / 8th grade divisions.
- All bats should have a USSSA stamp.
- Baseballs and softballs will be provided by the communities where games are being played.
- Catchers shall wear leg guards, chest protectors, and a catching helmet.
  - The catcher's helmet shall have a face guard, extended throat guard, or separately attach throat guard, and fully cover both ears in divisions up to 5th / 6th.
  - 7th / 8th graders may wear catcher's masks that do not fully cover both ears.
- All boys catching must wear a protective cup.
- All other personal protective gear should be provided by the players.

### **Section 3:**

#### **Sportsmanship Policy**

##### **The South Metro Sports League Sportsmanship Policy:**

As a league, we encourage positive reinforcement from coaches, officials, parents and teammates for every player. Harassing, shouting, or engaging in any sort of emotional or physical harm to an opposing coach, league official/umpire, or any player will not be permitted. Individuals who fail to comply with this policy will be asked to leave the game or, at the discretion of league officials, will be removed from the league. We thank you for your cooperation with this matter as we strive to provide a safe and fun environment for the children in our communities to learn the fundamentals of youth sports.

- A coach, player, parent, or bench personnel shall not:
  - Deliberately throw a bat, helmet, or team equipment
  - Call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to balk or throw an illegal pitch
  - Use words to act to incite or try to incite spectators to demonstrations, or use profanity or remarks which reflect upon opposing player, umpire, or spectator
  - Enter the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions
  - Use amplifiers, speakers, or bull horns on the bench or on the field during the course of the game
  - Maliciously run into a fielder, even if the fielder is out of position
  - Be outside the vicinity of the designated dugout or bullpen area if not a batter, runner, on deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the 9 or 10 players on defense
  - Verbalize in any way with the opposing team for the purpose of intimidation
  - Exhibit behavior that is not in accordance with the spirit of fair play
- Umpires and league officials have the right to restrict a coach to his/her dugout for the remainder of the game if they feel that the coach is not following the rules of the game or acting in accordance with the spirit of fair play. The coach will be able to continue to coach his/her team from the dugout as long as the coach follows the rules the rest of the game. A coach that has been restricted to the dugout will not take the field to coach a base, talk to a pitcher, or discuss any calls with an umpire. A dugout restriction will be treated the same as a warning, and the coach will not be suspended from any future games.
- If a coach, player, or spectator is ejected from a game, the offender will be suspended for a minimum of one additional game. The one game suspension will be served at the next scheduled HOME league game. League officials reserve the right to suspend individuals for more than one game if the league officials deem it necessary, or the offender has been suspended before.
- If a coach, player, or spectator threatens an official, umpire, opposing coach, spectator or player, that individual will be removed from the league.

#### **Draft Rules**

The South Metro Sports Recreation Leagues have draft rules set to ensure fair play between share-play communities. In divisions where the score and standing are kept, each coach will be allowed to "freeze" or keep 5 players. The 5 players include the son/daughter of all coaches and team sponsors. After all coaches have selected their players, the remaining players will be distributed equally at the discretion of league officials by age, grade, and/or talent level.

In rare occasions, additional "freezes" may be allowed at the discretion of the league official as long as it does not affect the competitive balance of the league. League officials also reserve the right to allow less than the 5 standard "freezes" to help with the competitive balance of teams. Teams and individuals who would like to play with the same players and coaches each season should consider participating in the competitive leagues.

## Section 4:

### Beginner T-Ball

**Inning Definition:** All present batters will bat each inning

**Game Length:** 1 hour

**Field Dimensions:** 50' or 60' base paths, 10' diameter pitching circle at 42', 10' safety arc, 30' fielding tabs or arc used *No score or standings will be kept in this division*

#### General Rules:

- T-Ball games will be officiated by coaches. If umpires are assigned to t-ball games, it will be for training purposes only. The home team will supply an inning/timekeeper to keep track of innings played and official game time.
- Two defensive coaches will be allowed on the field of play. Coaches will be positioned outside of the 4-base dimensional square. The 4-base dimensional square is defined as the area inside each foul line to second base.

#### Offensive Rules:

- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted as the last batter.
- All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the order.
- Batters will continue to take turns at bat until all batters have hit.
- Batters will have 3 swinging attempts to hit the ball off the tee. The ball must go further than the 10' safety arc directly in front of the tee or will otherwise be considered a "strike". Each unsuccessful swing or foul ball will be considered a "strike". After the 3rd strike, the coach will assist the batter in completing the at-bat by reminding the batter of proper mechanics.
- Base runners will be able to advance once the ball is hit and put in play. A base runner who leaves the base before the ball is hit will be put back on their current base. No stealing is allowed. Base runners will advance one base at a time in beginner t-ball.
  - No advancement will be allowed on an overthrow as all batters/runners only advance one base per bat.
- Any attempt by a base runner to advance illegally after the ball has been returned inside the baselines will result in a "dead ball" situation with that runner, and they will return to their previous base.

#### Defensive Rules:

- All players will play in the field with 1 pitcher, 1 catcher, 4 infielders and the remainder of the players will be placed outside the 4-base dimensional square and be considered outfielders.
- All outfielders must stay behind the baseline.
- The defensive player designated as pitcher cannot leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit.
- The defensive catcher is required to wear a batting helmet with a facemask while in the catcher's position.
- 3 outs will not end the inning. (Innings change once all players on offense have batted)

## Section 5

### Machine Pitch Baseball Rules (1/2 Grade Boys)

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length:** 6 innings or time limit reached

**Time Limit:** No new inning will start after 1 hour 15 minutes

**Field Dimensions:** 60' bases, 16' diameter pitching circle(Front of circle at 42'), 20' batting arc and 30' fielding tabs

**Pitching Machine:** The Middle of the pitching machine will be placed at 42 feet with a pitching speed of 35 MPH

***Score will be kept by the umpires to keep track of innings only, no standings will be kept for this division***

- 10 defensive players will play the field with 4 outfielders. The 4th outfielder may not be allowed to assume an infield position. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines.
- Defensive players must line up behind the 30' fielding tabs or arc prior to the ball being batted.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- A batter shall receive a maximum of 5 hittable pitches. A hittable pitch will be determined by the umpire. The batter will receive an additional pitch for a foul ball batted on the 5th hittable pitch. Subsequent pitches will be proved for the subsequent foul balls.
  - A batted ball must travel the 20' batting arc to be a fair ball. This also applies to legally bunted balls.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- A base runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reached home plate. Stealing is not allowed.
- When a batted ball hits the pitching machine, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base and all runners advance one base.
- A batted ball or thrown ball striking a pitcher, coach, or player(s) off the field or striking a player in the "On deck" area shall be called a dead ball.
- Umpires will call "Time" after every play and declare the ball dead.

- Overthrows - An overthrow is a ball that is thrown to an infielder covering a base in the infield area that is not cleanly caught. If an overthrow occurs at first base, the runner must remain at first base (no advancement). For all other overthrows follow the rule here:
  - Only one base advancement will be permitted on an overthrow that occurs at second base or third base, even if the ball remains in play.
  - If a second overthrow occurs, the play will be called dead by the umpire, and all runners will return to the base they occupied following the first overthrow. Example: Batter is advancing to 2nd base on a long hit to the outfield. The defense overthrows 2nd base and the runner attempts to advance to 3rd base. If the defense overthrows 3rd base, the batter/runner may not advance home and must stay at 3rd base.
- Except for the above rule on overthrows, the ball will remain live until controlled by the pitcher inside the pitcher's circle.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same
- The infield fly rule is not in effect in this division.
- The catcher must receive the pitch lined up behind the home plate in a normal manner.
- The player in the pitcher position is to stand on one side of the machine and must have one foot inside the pitching circle until the ball is played by the batter.
- One defensive coach will be allowed on the field of play but must position him/herself in the outfield behind the players.
- If the pitching machine is not able to be used due to safety with weather, or there is an electrical issue that prohibits the use of the machine, the game will continue with the offensive coach pitching. Coaches will pitch at the front of the circle (42') to be consistent with the pitching distance of the pitching machine. Hittable will continue to be called by the umpire.

#### **Other Notes:**

- Standard baseballs will be fed into the pitching machine by the Coaches, in a consistent manner.
- The pitching machine will only be adjusted between innings or if the machine has become inconsistent in throwing hittable pitches at the sole discretion of the umpire. The machine will not be adjusted in speed or placement of the ball for individual batters.
- If the game time reaches 1 hour 15 minutes while the visitors are batting, the home team will be given the opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning as well. We do not keep score or standings in this division, so all innings will be fully completed.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.
- A double first base may be used when available. If a double first base is provided, the batter/runner will use the orange base when advancing to first base and all defensive plays will be made on the white base.
- If deemed appropriate by the umpire, a second defensive coach may be permitted to stand at the backstop to help return past baseballs to the umpire feeding the pitching machine. This coach is to stay at the backstop while the ball is in play. The umpire will only allow this when it is safe for a coach and to speed up the game.
- If one umpire is present, he/she will call the game from behind the pitching machine. A two-umpire crew will call the game in the same positions as a standard game of baseball with the field umpire feeding the balls into the machine.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 5 or Section I, refer to USSSA Baseball rules at <https://www.ussabaseball.org/rules-by-laws>.

## Section 6:

### Coach Pitch Softball Rules (1/2 Girls)

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length:** 6 innings or time limit reached

**Time Limit:** No new inning will start after 1 hour 15 minutes

**Field Dimensions:** 60' bases, 35' pitching plate with a 16' diameter circle, 10' batting arc and 30' fielding tabs or arc

**Scores will be kept by the umpires to keep track of innings only, no standings will be kept for this division**

- Ten (10) defensive players will play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder may not be allowed to assume an infield position. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines.
- Defensive players must line up behind the 30' fielding tabs or arc prior to the ball being batted.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs have been scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- A batter shall receive a maximum of five (5) hittable pitches. A hittable pitch will be determined by the umpire. The batter will receive an additional pitch for a foul ball batted on the 5th hittable pitch. Subsequent pitches will be provided for subsequent foul balls.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- A base runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate. Stealing is not allowed.
- When a batted ball hits the coach, who is pitching the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first (1st) base and all runners advance one (1) base. The coach will try his/her best to avoid getting hit by a batted ball.
- A batted or thrown ball striking a pitcher, coach, or player(s) off the field or striking a player in the "On Deck" area shall be called a dead ball.
  - Umpires will call "time" after every play and declare the ball dead.
- Overthrows - An overthrow is a ball that is thrown to an infielder covering a base in the infield area that is not cleanly caught. Runners may not advance on an overthrow.
- Except for the above rule on overthrows, the ball will remain live until controlled by the pitcher inside the pitcher's circle.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same.
- The infield fly rule is not in effect for this division.
- The catcher must receive the pitch behind home plate in a normal manner. A catcher's box may not be drawn for this division.
- The player in the pitcher position is to stand to one side of the coach who is pitching and must have one foot inside of the pitching circle until the ball is played by the batter.
- One defensive coach will be allowed on the field of play but must position him/herself in the outfield behind the players.
- The coach pitching should pitch from the pitching plate to provide consistency for the batter. The coach is allowed to move up to the front of the pitching circle if they feel their batter requires them to do so to be successful in putting the ball in play.

### Other Notes:

- Standard 11" softballs will be used in the coach pitch softball division.
- If the game time reaches 1 hour 15 minutes while the visitors are batting, the home team will be given the opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning as well. We do not keep score or standings in this division, so all innings will be fully completed.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.
- A double first base may be used when available. If a double first base is provided, the batter/runner will use the orange base when advancing to first base and all defensive plays will be made on the white base.
- If one umpire is present, he/she will call the game from behind home plate. A two-umpire crew will call the game in the same positions as a standard game of softball.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 6 or Section 1, refer to USSSA Softball rules at [https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch\\_rules.pdf](https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch_rules.pdf).

## Section 7:

### 3/4 Player Pitch Baseball Rules

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length:** 6 innings (3.5 inning minimum for complete games)

**Time Limit:** No new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes

**Field Dimensions:** 60' bases, pitching mound used with pitcher's plate set at 40'

- Ten (10) defensive players will play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder may not be allowed to assume an infield position. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines in the grass area of the outfield.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of the official score and number of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same.
  - Once a pitcher is subbed out of the pitcher's position, that player cannot substitute back into the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
  - That player can substitute back into the game at a different position other than pitcher.
- A dropped third strike will be an automatic out.
- No Leading off.
- Base Running - When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached home plate. Once the catcher has secured the ball and the runner has stopped his forward progress, the runner must immediately return to the base.
- Stealing - Base runners may only steal one base per pitch.
- A runner may not advance from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home unless done so in a live ball situation created by the batter hitting the ball, or by being forced to advance home with a balk or walk. A throw from the catcher to 3<sup>rd</sup> base does not allow the runner to advance home unless the catcher is fielding a ball that has been put into play by the batter.
- The catcher must receive the pitch lined up behind home plate in a normal manner.
- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field of play and must coach from the dugout.
- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect – runners may advance at their own risk.
- A courtesy runner for the catcher of the previous inning only may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player that made the last out. If no outs have been recorded the courtesy runner will be the previous batter not on base.
- Pitching Limitations: The pitcher is only allowed to throw a maximum of 55 pitches, or 3 innings in one game. (A pitch is defined as a ball delivered to a batter), or 9 innings in 1 week. (A week will be defined as 12:01 am on Monday through 12:00 pm on Sunday.) Pitchers that pitch two consecutive days will have to rest the third day regardless of innings or pitches pitched.
- Pitching rules take effect after the 1st official pitch of the game is thrown.
- It is the responsibility of the team coach and parents to make sure that players are not pitching more than allowed.
- Players may not switch fielding positions when the Coach comes onto pitch to the Batter. (Example: Player/ pitcher may not move to shortstop position, during the coach pitching to the batter, if the pitcher / player does, then he / she will not be allowed to return to pitch in the game. Players will be allowed to play any other fielding position except pitcher.)
- At Bat Scenarios:
  - Batter strikes out (strike zone will be larger for this division at the umpire's discretion)
  - Batter hits fair ball.
  - Batter is hit by the player-pitcher and is awarded first base.
  - If the player-pitcher walks the batter, there will be no walk issued, instead one of the batter's on-field Coaches will pitch a maximum of 3 additional pitches **from the front of the mound** (regardless of count) to give the batter an opportunity to put the ball into play. Foul balls are included in 3 coach-pitches (ONE ADDITIONAL PITCH WILL BE AWARDED IF THE Batter FOULS THE BASEBALL ON THE THIRD PITCH DELIVERED BY THE COACH).

#### **Base Runners cannot steal while the coach is pitching to hitters.**

- Coach visits to the Mound: When a team is charged with its second visit to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may be moved to another defensive position.

### Other Notes:

- Standard baseballs will be used in this division.
- If the game time reaches 1 hour 30 minutes while the visitors are batting, and the visiting team is unable to score enough runs to at least tie the game in the current inning then the game will be over. If the game time reaches 1 hour and 30 minutes and the visiting team is winning the game, the home team will be afforded the opportunity to complete their at-bats in the bottom of the inning, regardless of the score of the game.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 7 or Section 1, refer to USSSA Baseball rules at <https://www.ussabaseball.org/rules-by-laws>.



## Section 8:

### 3/4 Player Pitch Softball Rules

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length:** 6 innings (3.5 minimum for complete game)

**Time Limit:** No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes

**Field Dimensions:** 60' bases, pitching plate set at 35' with a 16' diameter pitching circle

- Ten (10) defensive players will play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder may not be allowed to assume an infield position. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines in the grass area of the outfield.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of the official score and number of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same.
  - Once a pitcher is subbed out of the pitcher's position, that player cannot substitute back into the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
  - That player can substitute back into the game at a different position other than pitcher.
- A dropped third strike will be an automatic out.
- A runner may not advance from 3rd base to home unless done so in a live ball situation created by the batter hitting the ball, or by being forced to advance home with a balk or walk. A throw from the catcher to 3rd base does not allow the runner to advance home unless the catcher is fielding a ball that has been put into play by the batter.
- The catcher must receive the pitch lined up behind home plate in a normal manner.
- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field of play and must coach from the dugout.
- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect for this division – runners may advance at their own risk.
- Stealing: Players may steal one base per pitch. An overthrow from the catcher on a stolen base will result in a dead ball. Runners may not steal home.
- A runner will be called out for leaving the base before the ball is pitched.
- A courtesy runner for the catcher of the previous inning only may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player that made the last out. If no outs have been recorded the courtesy runner will be the previous batter not on base.
- Pitching Limitations: A pitcher can only appear in 5 innings per game.
- The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh that the umpire deems distracting to the batter.
  - It is the responsibility of the team coach and parents to make sure that players are not pitching more than allowed.
- Players may not switch fielding positions when the Coach comes onto pitch to the Batter. (Example: Player/ pitcher may not move to short stop position, during the coach pitching to the batter, if the pitcher / player does, then he / she will not be allowed to return to pitch in the game. Players will be allowed to play any other fielding position except pitcher.)
- At Bat Scenarios:
  - Batter strikes out (strike zone will be larger for this division at the umpire's discretion)
  - Batter hits fair ball.
  - Batter is hit by the player-pitcher and is awarded first base.
  - If the player-pitcher walks the batter, there will be no walk issued, instead one of the batter's on-field Coaches will pitch a maximum of 3 additional pitches from the front of the pitching circle (regardless of count) to give the batter an opportunity to put the ball into play. Foul balls are included in 3 coach-pitches (ONE ADDITIONAL PITCH WILL BE AWARDED IF THE Batter FOULS THE BASEBALL ON THE THIRD PITCH DELIVERED BY THE COACH).

#### **Base Runners cannot steal while the coach is pitching to hitters.**

- Coach visits to the Mound: When a team is charged with its second visit to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may be moved to another defensive position.
- Pitching rules take effect after the 1st official pitch of the game is thrown.
- Illegal pitches will be called at the discretion of the umpires. Umpires will be encouraged to give warnings and correct the pitcher when an illegal pitch occurs.

### Other Notes:

- Standard 11" optic yellow softballs will be used in this division.
- If the game time reaches 1 hour 30 minutes while the visitors are batting, and the visiting team is unable to score enough runs to at least tie the game in the current inning then the game will be over. If the game time reaches 1 hour and 30 minutes and the visiting team is winning the game, the home team will be afforded the opportunity to complete their at-bats in the bottom of the inning, regardless of the score of the game.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 8 or Section 1, refer to USSSA Softball rules at [https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch\\_rules.pdf](https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch_rules.pdf).

## Section 9:

### 5/6 and 7/8 Player Pitch Baseball Rules

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length (5/6):** 6 innings (3.5 inning minimum for complete game)

**Game Length (7/8):** 7 innings (4.5 inning minimum for complete game)

**Time Limit:** No new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes

**Field Dimensions (5th/6th):** 65' bases, pitching mound used with pitchers plate set at 46'

**Field Dimensions (7th/8th):** 85' bases, pitching mound used with pitchers plate set at 54'

- Nine (9) defensive players will play in the field with three (3) outfielders. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines in the grass area of the outfield.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of the official score and number of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same.
  - Once a pitcher is subbed out of the pitcher's position, that player cannot substitute back into the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
  - That player can substitute back into the game at a different position other than pitcher.
- The batter/runner may try to advance on a dropped 3rd strike.
  - If there is a base runner occupying first base, the batter/runner is unable to try to advance on a dropped 3rd strike and is ruled out.
- The catcher must receive the pitch lined up behind home plate in a normal manner.
- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field of play and must coach from the dugout.
- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect – runners may advance at their own risk.
- Stealing:
  - 5/6 Grade: Players may lead off but may not steal until the ball crosses home plate. Stealing Base Runners may only steal (1) one base at a time, no advancement will be allowed on an overthrow on a steal at 2nd base or 3rd base. Runners at 3rd base will not be allowed to come home unless the ball is hit into the field of play, or forced home by a walk.
  - 7/8 Grade: Players may lead off and stealing is allowed, including home.
- A courtesy runner for the catcher of the previous inning only may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player that made the last out. If no outs have been recorded the courtesy runner will be the previous batter not on base.
- Pitching Limitations:
  - 5/6 Grade: The pitcher is only allowed to throw a maximum of 65 pitches, or 3 innings in one game. (A pitch is defined as a ball delivered to a batter), or 9 innings in 1 week. (A week will be defined as 12:01 am on Monday through 12:00 pm on Sunday.) Pitchers that pitch two consecutive days will have to rest the third day regardless of innings or pitches pitched.
  - 7/8 Grade: The pitcher is only allowed to throw a maximum of 75 pitches, or 3 innings in one game. (A pitch is defined as a ball delivered to a batter), or 9 innings in 1 week. (A week will be defined as 12:01 am on Monday through 12:00 pm on Sunday.) Pitchers that pitch two consecutive days will have to rest the third day regardless of innings or pitches pitched.
- Pitching rules take effect after the 1st official pitch of the game is thrown.
- It is the responsibility of the team coach and parents to make sure that players are not pitching more than allowed.
- Balks: Pitchers will be called for balks. NO WARNINGS will be given
- **Penalty for a balk:** The ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise, and all other runners advance at least one base in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk. When a balk is called, and the pitch is delivered it will be considered neither a ball nor strike unless the pitch is ball four (4) awarding the batter first base and forcing all runners on base to advance.
  - **Note:** Umpires should bear in mind that the purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. If there is doubt in the umpire's mind, the "intent" of the pitcher should govern. However, certain specifics should be borne in mind:
    - 1. Straddling the pitcher's plate without the ball is to be interpreted as intent to deceive and ruled a balk.
    - 2. With a runner on first base, and the runner attempting to steal second, the pitcher may make a complete turn, without hesitating toward first, and throw to second. This is not to be interpreted as throwing to an unoccupied base.
  - **Approved Ruling 1:** In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk.
  - **Approved Ruling 2:** A runner who misses the first base to which that runner is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule.
  - **Note:** On any play on which a balk occurs, if action advances the batter-runner to first base and also

advances all runners to at least one base, the balk is nullified. Also note that if the pitch is delivered, it counts against pitch count, even if the balk is nullified.

- An intentional walk may take place by announcement from the catcher or pitcher.
- Coach visits to the Mound: When a team is charged with its second visit to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may be moved to another defensive position.

#### **Other Notes:**

- Standard baseballs will be used in this division.
- If the game time reaches 1 hour 45 minutes while the visitors are batting, and the visiting team is unable to score enough runs to at least tie the game in the current inning then the game will be over. If the game time reaches 1 hour and 45 minutes and the visiting team is winning the game, the home team will be afforded the opportunity to complete their at-bats in the bottom of the inning, regardless of the score of the game.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.
- Metal cleats are only allowed to be worn in the 7th/8th grade division of baseball.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 9 or Section 1, refer to USSSA Baseball rules at <https://www.ussabaseball.org/rules-by-laws>.

### **Section 10:**

#### **5/6 and 7/8 Player Pitch Softball Rules**

**Inning Definition:** 3 outs or 5 runs scored

**Game Length:** 6 innings (3.5 inning minimum for complete game)

**Time Limit:** No new inning after 1 hour 30 minutes

**Field Dimensions (5th/6th):** 60' bases, pitching plate set at 40' with a 16' diameter pitching circle.

**Field Dimensions (7th/8th):** 60' bases, pitching plate set at 40' with a 16' diameter pitching circle.

**Ball Size (5th/6th):** 11" Softball optic yellow softballs

**Ball Size (7th/8th):** 12" Softball optic yellow softballs

- Ten (10) defensive players will play in the field with four (4) outfielders in the 5th/6th grade division. The fourth (4th) outfielder may not be allowed to assume an infield position. All outfielders must stay behind the baselines in the grass area of the outfield. Nine (9) defensive players will play the field in the 7th/8th grade division.
- All players present will bat each inning until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored.
- The batting order shall constitute all players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.
- The home team will supply the official bookkeeper and will keep track of the official score and number of innings played. Umpires will keep track of official game time.
- Teams may use free substitution for position players between innings for defense, but the batting order must remain the same.
  - Once a pitcher is subbed out of the pitcher's position, that player cannot substitute back into the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
  - That player can substitute back into the game at a different position other than pitcher.
- The batter/runner may attempt to advance on a dropped 3rd strike.
  - If there is a base runner occupying first base, the batter/runner is unable to try to advance on a dropped 3rd strike and is ruled out. (Even if the player at first base is advancing to second base, first base is occupied resulting in an out.)
- The catcher must receive the pitch lined up behind home plate in a normal manner.
- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field of play and must coach from the dugout.
- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect for these divisions. Runners may advance at their own risk.
- Stealing:
  - 5th-6th Grade: Stealing Base Runners may only steal (1) one base at a time, no advancement will be allowed on an overthrow on a steal at 2nd base or 3rd base. Runners at 3rd base will not be allowed to come home unless the ball is hit into the field of play, or forced home by a walk.
  - 7th-8th Grade: Players may steal, including home.
- A runner will be called out for leaving the base before the ball is pitched.
- A courtesy runner for the catcher of the previous inning only may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player that made the last out. If no outs have been recorded the courtesy runner will be the previous batter not on base.
- Pitching Limitations: A pitcher can only appear in 5 innings per game.
- The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh that the umpire deems distracting to the batter. It is the responsibility of the team coach and parents to make sure that players are not pitching more than allowed.
- Coach visits to the Mound: When a team is charged with its second visit to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may be moved to another defensive position.

- Pitching rules take effect after the 1st official pitch of the game is thrown.
- Illegal pitches will be called at the discretion of the umpires. Umpires will be encouraged to give warnings and correct the pitcher when an illegal pitch occurs.

**Other Notes:**

- If the game time reaches 1 hour 30 minutes while the visitors are batting, and the visiting team is unable to score enough runs to at least tie the game in the current inning then the game will be over. If the game time reaches 1 hour and 30 minutes and the visiting team is winning the game, the home team will be afforded the opportunity to complete their at-bats in the bottom of the inning, regardless of the score of the game.
- Coaches are required to encourage players to hustle on and off the field between innings to complete more innings each game.
- A catcher's box is not required to be drawn for play in this division.
- Metal cleats may be worn by the 7th/8th grade division only.

For all rulings and game situations not listed, please refer to Section 1 of this rulebook. For all other rulings and game situations not addressed in Section 10 or Section 1, refer to USSSA Softball rules at [https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch\\_rules.pdf](https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch_rules.pdf).