

OFFICIAL RULES METROWEST GIRLS SOFTBALL

MAJORS DIVISION

Grades 5 and 6

Fall 2022 – Updated August 2021

If rules are not specifically covered, USA Softball rules shall govern play.

Rule #	Rule	Explanation
C1	Pitching Distance	40 feet
C4	Pitching Limit	Unlimited
C3	Pitching Limit Exception	A pitcher who has pitched at least 3 innings and whose team is leading by 9 runs or more cannot continue to pitch. This pitcher may re-enter, but only if her team leads by 7 runs or less.
C5 & C6	Illegal Pitch	Any illegal pitch will be considered a ball. Runners do NOT advance on an illegal pitch
C7	Hit By Pitch Limit	3 batters in an inning; 5 in a game
C12	Ball	12" ,47 core USA/ASA Approved
D4	Dropped 3 rd Strike	Allowed
D5	Infield Fly Rule	Infield Fly is in effect
D7	Bunting	USA rules in effect
D8	Slashing	Is NOT allowed
D9	Stealing	Stealing will only be allowed upon pitchers release
D10	Stealing Home	Stealing home successfully is permitted twice per inning. There shall be no stealing home when a team is ahead by 7 or more runs.
D11	Runners	Runners are allowed to advance only 1 base on an attempted steal. Once the runner has advanced one base they are not allowed to advance again until another pitch has been thrown (unless they are advancing due to a batted ball).
D12	Bunting/Stealing Run Limit	Bunting and stealing are NOT allowed when the team at bat is ahead by 7 or more runs. Runners are only allowed to advance on a batted ball.
	Inning Run Limit	4 per half inning
D19	Inning Run Limit Exception	If the team at bat is behind by 9 or more runs in any inning and there are fewer than 3 outs, they will be allowed to continue to score runs in that inning until their score within 7 runs of the other team. This allows them to exceed the 4 run per inning rule prior to the last inning of the game.
D20	Inning Run Limit Final Inning	No limit on runs scored in final inning

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A. Scheduling

1. Teams will be allowed a maximum of 5 practice sessions per week during the preseason and 2 practices per week once the season has begun (there are **no** practices for **Fall softball** once the season has begun).
2. A league representative should be consulted to confirm postponement of a game.
3. The visiting coach and the umpire must be notified at least 2 hours prior to game time if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions.
4. The umpire will use discretion in deciding if a game is to be postponed.
5. Games must be stopped immediately upon sighting of lightning or upon hearing thunder. Fields must be cleared for at least 30 minutes **AFTER** the last time thunder is heard or lightning is seen.
6. It is the home team's responsibility to reschedule a game no more than two weeks after the postponement for any spring softball game (there are **no** makeup games for **Fall softball**).
7. Each game is 6 innings long. To be official, 4 innings must be completed (or 3 1/2 innings in the event the home team is ahead).

B. Players

1. Each team will play up to 10 players in the field at a time.
2. No more than 6 players are allowed to be on the infield before the pitcher releases the ball.
3. There will be no substitutions allowed using players from higher divisions. Players from lower divisions can be used to prevent a team from forfeiting.
4. Added players must be declared prior to the start of a game, placed at the end of the batting order, and regular team players must get their first choice of field position.
5. Added players are allowed to pitch, if needed, but only 2 innings per game. Added players will **not** pitch the first or last inning.
6. Coaches should do everything they can to play the game as scheduled even if they are short-handed. If one team is short-handed the opposing team is strongly encouraged to send players to the short-handed team.
7. A team expecting to have fewer than 7 players is obligated to contact the opposing coach at least 24 hours before game time to reschedule the game.
8. All players will be included in a continuous batting order. The initial batting order reflects those players ready to play at game time. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order. If an injured player in the continuous batting order is unable to play she will be skipped in the order and the opposing team will not get an automatic out.
9. Each player must play 2 complete innings in the field unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her.
10. Free defensive substitution rules will be in effect.
11. For spring playoff games: (There are **no playoffs for fall softball**).
 - i If a team is unable to field at least 7 players at any point during the game, that team will forfeit.
 - ii Players may be promoted from lower divisions only if there are not enough players available from the original roster.
 - iii Players from other teams within the same division are **NOT** allowed to play on a playoff team.
 - iv Players from lower divisions are **NOT** allowed to pitch.
 - v Players from higher divisions are **NOT** allowed to play.

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C. Pitching

1. The pitcher's plate will be 40 feet from the apex (point) of the plate.
2. **ANY player can be re-inserted as a pitcher** during a game.
3. A pitcher who has pitched at least 3 innings and whose team is leading by 9 runs or more cannot continue to pitch. This pitcher may re-enter, but only if her team leads by 7 runs or less.
4. The pitcher can pitch unlimited innings per game.
5. Any illegal pitch will be considered a ball.
6. Runners do NOT advance a base on an illegal pitch.
7. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning she will be taken out for the rest of the inning. The pitcher can return to pitch during the game. However, if she hits 2 additional batters (or 5 total for the game) she must be taken out (from the pitcher's position) for the rest of the game.

Equipment & Field of Play

8. The bases will be 60 feet apart.
9. Double safety base is required at 1st base.
10. Batting helmets with facemasks and chinstraps are mandatory.
11. Full catchers gear is required.
12. **Twelve-inch .47 core softballs will be used.**
13. All bats must visibly display a USA Softball approval stamp.



D. Game Rules

1. During a game, there will be a maximum of 3 coaches, 1 scorer and the members of the team seated on the bench.
2. The home team score book shall govern the score of the game.
3. *The look back rule is in effect.* When a pitcher has the ball within a 8-foot radius around the pitcher's rubber, the base runner is obligated to proceed in either direction to a base. If a player stands still or changes direction she will be called out UNLESS the pitcher makes a play for the runner.
4. **Dropped 3rd strike rule is in affect.**
5. **The infield fly rule is in effect.**
6. A courtesy runner will be encouraged for the catcher with 1 or more outs to allow for equipment change. The courtesy runner will be the latest recorded out.
7. Bunting is permitted.
8. Slashing (i.e. squaring to bunt then pulling back and swinging away) **is not allowed.** The ball is dead and the batter is out.
9. **Stealing will only be allowed upon the pitchers release.**
10. *Stealing of any base is permitted. Stealing home successfully is permitted only twice per inning.*
11. *Runners are allowed to advance only 1 base on an attempted steal.*

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12. Bunting and stealing are NOT allowed when the team at bat is ahead by 7 or more runs. Runners are only allowed to advance on a batted ball.
13. Runners are allowed to tag up on fair and foul balls.
14. The continuation rule is NOT in effect. A batter who receives a base on balls is required to stop at first base.
15. **A new inning starting beyond 1 hour and 30 minutes will be declared the last (tie breaker being the only exception). No new innings will be started after 1 hour and 45 minutes. If there's a batter up at 1 hour and 45 minute mark, that batter may finish the at bat. If the inning isn't completed, the final score reverts to the previous inning.**
16. If the score is tied after 6 innings, and the game has lasted less than 1 hour and 45 minutes, a **tie breaker will go into effect**. The player who was the last completed at bat in the 6th inning will begin at 2nd base with the player batting after her in the order leading off the inning. The teams play subsequent innings using this format until one team wins or the 1 hour and 45 minutes has expired
17. Any tied games, in **extra** innings at the 2 hour mark, **will be declared a tie**.

Run Limits

18. There is a **4** run per inning rule. Once a team has scored 4 runs, the half inning will be terminated, regardless of the number of outs.
19. If the team at bat is behind by 9 or more runs in any inning and there are fewer than 3 outs, they will be allowed to continue to score runs in that inning until their score is within 7 runs of the other team. This allows them to exceed the 4 run per inning rule prior to the last inning of the game.
20. There are no run limits in the last inning of the game.
Mercy rule is in effect once the losing team has batted 5 times and they are down by 15 or more runs.

E. Safety Rules

1. **All players must remove ALL jewelry to be eligible to play. Taping over earrings is not allowed.**
2. Metrowest softball strongly recommends the use of mouth guards on the playing field.
3. A batter that throws the bat will be given a warning (the umpire will inform the coaches and the player of the warning). The second time a batter throws the bat the player will be called out.
4. If the defensive player blocks the base path without possession of the ball, the runner will be safe.