

Girl's Junior League Softball Rules 2021

All game play rules are based on current USA Softball "Official Regulations and Playing Rules." Exceptions to these rules, as agreed upon by the League Commissioners are as follows:

EQUIPMENT

1. Game attire requires shall consist of issued uniform shirt, cap and socks; and black shorts or baseball pants.
2. All batters, base runners, and player base coaches are required to wear protective helmets.
3. Catchers are required to wear shin guards, chest protector, helmet, and mask.
4. All players on defense are required to use a glove.
5. Shoes with metal spikes or metal cleats are not permitted. Softball or soccer cleats are okay.
6. Sliding pads are permitted.
7. Pitchers are required to wear face guards. Other infielders are encouraged to wear face guards.

PLAYERS and SUBSTITUTES

1. Each team will field 10 players: 4 outfielders, 4 infielders, 1 pitcher, and 1 catcher. The outfielders will be positioned in their assigned sector at the time of the pitch, eliminating a designated "short fielder" outfield position. The outfielders cannot cover a base or take a throw at a base during a primary play. An outfielder may cover a base as a secondary action such as backing up a base during a rundown action or overthrows.
2. A team shall be allowed to play with 6 players, however, the other team shall be allowed to play with 10 players.
3. A continuous batting order (C.B.O.) of all players present shall be used. A player arriving late may only be inserted at the bottom of the C.B.O. This order is followed throughout the game regardless of defensive substitutions made in the field. **Batting order and any late arrivals should be shared with opposing coach—there are small tear sheets in the back of the score book.**
4. A pitcher once removed, can re-enter into the pitching position later in the game provided she does not exceed the maximum allowed innings pitched per game. A removed pitcher may also continue playing at other positions on the field when not pitching, but is subject to the equal playing rule.
5. All players must play equal time. In order to help ensure equal playing time, no players shall be out of the defensive lineup for a second time until (or coincident with) such time as all other players have been out at least once. Defensive substitutions will be allowed at the end of every inning and as needed because of injury.

GAME PLAY

1. Unless shortened due to weather or darkness: (i) all League games are 6 innings , however, in the case of a tie game, it may be continued, subject to clause (ii); (ii) no inning may begin more than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch; (iii) playoff games (other than the Championship) are subject to the same limitations, except that in the case of a tie game, it shall be continued one inning at a time without a time limit until a winner is determined, and if such tie game is halted on account of weather or darkness, it shall resume the following day; (iv) championship game is 6 innings (subject to rule on ties) and does not have a time limit.
2. All time considerations may be waived if the game must be called off due to darkness or hazardous weather conditions. This will be determined by the umpire, in consultation with the home team coach.
3. Official games are 3 complete innings.
4. Each offensive ½ inning will be 3 outs or 4 runs, whichever comes first.
5. For instructional purposes, a coach may call no more than 2 time outs per inning. Time outs should be brief.
6. The designated home team will bat last in an inning.
7. No intentional walks are permitted.
8. The infield fly rule will not be called.
9. Stealing of 3rd base is allowed.
 - The runner may leave 2nd base at the time the pitcher releases the ball during her pitch (normal USA softball rule on this)
 - The runner must return immediately to 2nd base or continue to 3rd once the ball is returned to the pitcher near the mound area. In other words, she can't remain off the base.
 - There is no advancement by any other runner on an attempt to throw out the stealing runner. As a result, it always makes sense for the catcher to try to throw out the stealing runner at third.
 - The runner will be called out if she doesn't act immediately after the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitching circle.

GAME PLAY (continued)

- Except for 2nd to 3rd there is no advancement by the runner to the next base on passed balls, wild pitches, or dropped 3rd strikes.
 - It is recommended that the coach limit stealing if their team is 15 or more runs ahead. Please use your best judgment. ***However, other than the 4 run cap, there is no other mercy rule.***
10. There are no balks in softball.
 11. Bunting is allowed.
 12. Base runners shall advance only 1 base when the ball is overthrown into foul territory. A base runner can advance as many bases as she can when the ball is overthrown in fair territory.
 13. The ball shall be declared dead after any play on the field once the ball is delivered back to the pitcher and she has control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. Runners may not advance beyond the base they are advancing to when the pitcher gets control of the ball and runners less than half-way to the next base will be instructed by the umpire to return back to the prior base.
 14. In the case of a batter throwing a bat as part of her swing, the batter will be issued a team warning after the play is completed. After this warning, any such incidents committed by the warned team will be penalized as follows: ball is dead, batter is out, any base runners must return to the base held at the time of such pitch.
 15. Base runners may not leave the base until the pitched ball is released by the pitcher (USA Softball rule (*new rule for us in 2021*)).
 16. Pitchers: Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. Pitchers must start their windmill or slingshot motion with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. She shall bring her hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after her hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step. After the ball is released, pitchers may take additional steps as needed for proper fielding positioning.
 17. Regulation playing field, 60 foot base paths but 35 foot pitching distance.

18. For the strike zone, home plate shall be enlarged by one and one half inches on each side (total of 20 inches). This is an EXPANDED STRIKE ZONE.
19. The strike zone will be the space between the batter's armpits and the knees when the batter assumes her natural stance at the plate.
20. Only a teammate or an adult coach is permitted in the coaching boxes at 1st and 3rd bases.
21. Minimum No. of Players: Because our interest is in playing softball, we will do everything we can to get games in. Therefore, the following rules will be in effect:
 - a. If at game time there are at least 6 players on each team, the game will be played.
 - b. If a coach knows beforehand that he or she cannot field a 6 player team, the Junior League Commissioner should be notified so that the game may be rescheduled.
 - c. If at game time, and after a 15 minute wait, one team still has fewer than 6 players, while the other team has at least 6, then the team with more players shall allow as many players as necessary to play for the other team to even the number of players on both teams and a game will be played, however the official final score shall be deemed to be 7-0 in favor of the team that had enough or extra players at the 15 minute mark.

GAME RESULTS and POSTPONEMENTS

1. Coaches will keep track of the results of each game and the winning coach will email the score to the League Commissioner within 48 hours (12 hours during playoff season). Formal standings will be kept that will be used to seed teams in the season ending Tournament.
2. Weather cancellations or cancellations due to poor field conditions is the responsibility of the home team which shall call the visiting team at least 2 Hours prior to game time to inform them of any cancellation.
3. The date for playing a postponed game will be determined by the League Commissioner and will be played within 2 weeks from the originally scheduled date.

OTHER JUNIOR LEAGUE EXCEPTIONS

1. Pitchers may pitch no more than 3 innings in a game. Catchers may catch up to 3 innings. Those 3 innings may be consecutive or at any time in the game.
2. Except for Rule 1, no player is to play more than 2 innings at any one position in a game in this division nor more than 2 consecutive innings within the following group of positions: P, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and SS. Innings pitched by a player will count towards such "consecutive innings rule (i.e. a pitcher who throws 2 or 3 innings cannot go to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or shortstop). If a coach runs into an extraordinary situation where he/she must play a player (other than pitcher) for a 3rd inning at the same position, or group of positions, then he/she must first inform the opposing coach of this situation prior to allowing this player to play the additional inning in such position or group

of positions. Also, to ensure some minimum playing time in the infield, by the end of the third inning, every player must have played at least one full inning in the infield (i.e. as P, C, 1st, 2nd, 3rd or SS).

3. The 4 run per inning limit will be waived in the last inning of the Tournament Championship game only.
4. Umpires must be paid by the home coach prior to the beginning of a game. A pay schedule will be provided at the beginning of the season. Coaches will be reimbursed by their respective Leagues.
5. Pitcher Plunk Rule. If a pitcher plunks two batters in the same inning, she is replaced as a pitcher for that inning and it counts as one of the three innings allowed to pitch. The pitcher can return to the mound in the next inning even though removed due to Plunk Rule unless that would be her fourth inning of pitching.
6. Wild Pitcher Rule: If a pitcher walks 5 batters in an inning, the pitcher is to be replaced for that inning and that inning counts as one of the three innings allowed to pitch. The pitcher can return to the mound for the next inning unless that would be her fourth inning of pitching. NOTE: See Temporary Coach Pitch Program that applies during the first half of the season only.
7. In order to keep the game moving, a coach for the defensive team shall be permitted to stand well behind the umpire and close to the backstop solely for the purpose of returning passed balls to the pitcher, except that he/she must stay clear of a passed ball when there is a runner on second base with an opportunity to steal third base. He/she may not coach the defensive team from that position.
8. To be eligible to play in playoff games, a player must have played in at least 4 regular season games (unless out due to injury)

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