

# OFFICIAL RULES METROWEST GIRLS SOFTBALL

## MAJORS DIVISION

Grades 5 and 6

2018 Season

Last Updated: March 14, 2018

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

Rule #	Rule	Explanation
C 1	Pitching Distance	40 feet
<b>C 4</b>	Pitching Limit	<b>Unlimited</b>
C3	Pitching Limit <b>Ex-ception</b>	A pitcher who has pitched at least 3 innings and whose team is leading by <b>9</b> runs or more cannot continue to pitch. This pitcher may re-enter, but only if her team leads by <b>7</b> runs or less.
C 5 & C6	Illegal Pitch	Any illegal pitch will be considered a ball. Runners do NOT advance on an illegal pitch
C 7	Hit By Pitch Limit	3 batters in an inning; 5 in a game
C12	Ball	12" ,47 core ASA Approved
<b>D 4</b>	Dropped 3 <sup>rd</sup> Strike	<b>Allowed</b>
D 5	Infield Fly Rule	<b>Infield Fly is in effect</b>
D 7	Bunting	USA rules in effect
D 8	Slashing	Is NOT allowed
D 9	Stealing	9. Stealing will only be allowed upon pitchers release
D 10	<b>Stealing Home</b>	<b>10. Stealing home <b>successfully</b> is permitted twice per inning. There shall be no stealing home when a team is ahead by 7 or more runs.</b>
D 11		11. 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).
D 12	Bunting/Stealing Run <b>Limit</b>	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.
	<b>Inning Run Limit</b>	<b>4 per half inning</b>

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D 19	Inning Run Limit Exception	If the team at bat is behind by <b>9</b> 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 <b>7</b> runs of the other team. This allows them to exceed the <b>4</b> run per inning rule prior to the last inning of the game.
D 20	Inning Run Limit Final Inning	No limit on runs scored in final inning
D 21	Hit By Pitch - Rolling Pitch	Batters hit by a pitch (HBP) will be awarded first base. <i>However, batters must make an effort to avoid a ball that is errantly thrown which rolls to the plate. If, in the umpire's estimation, the batter does not make an effort to avoid being hit by a rolling pitch she will NOT be awarded a base and the pitch will count as a ball.</i>

### A. Scheduling

1. Teams will be allowed a maximum of 5 practice sessions per week during the pre-season 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).
8. **Hard Stop Time Limit** is 1-hour, 45-minutes (last batter up will be allowed to finish her at bat if game is still in progress).

### B. Players

1. Each team will play up to 10 players in the field at a time, but 4 players must start in the outfield upon the pitch.
2. No more than 6 players (Catcher/Pitcher/First/Second/SS/Third) 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.

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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 'loan' 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.

### C. Pitching

1. The front of the pitcher's plate will be 40 feet from the apex (point) of home plate. The pitcher's feet must always start from the pitcher's plate and the first step MUST be forward.
2. **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.

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**D. 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 face masks are mandatory, chin straps are NOT mandatory
11. Twelve-inch .47 core softballs will be used.
12. All bats must visibly display an ASA approval stamp.



**E. Game Rules**

13. During a game, there will be a maximum of 3 coaches, 1 scorer and the members of the team seated on the bench.
14. The home team score book shall govern the score of the game.
15. *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.
16. *Dropped 3rd strike rule is in affect.*
17. *The infield fly rule is in effect.*
18. A courtesy runner is encouraged for the catcher to allow for equipment change. The courtesy runner will be the latest recorded out.
19. Bunting is permitted.
20. Slashing (i.e. squaring to bunt then pulling back and swinging away) is **not allowed**. The ball is dead and the batter is out.
21. *Stealing will only be allowed upon the pitcher's release.*
22. *Stealing of any base is permitted. Stealing home successfully is permitted only twice (2x) per inning.*
23. *Runners are allowed to advance only 1 base on an attempted steal.*
24. 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.
25. Runners are allowed to tag up on fair and foul balls.
26. The continuation rule is **NOT** in effect. A batter who receives a base on balls is required to stop at first base.
27. 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

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28. hour and 45 minutes. If there's a batter up at 1 hour and 45 minute mark, that batter may finish her at bat. If the inning isn't completed, the final score reverts to the previous inning.
29. If the score is tied after 6 innings, and the game has lasted less than 2 hours, a **tie breaker will go into effect.** The player who was the last completed at bat in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning will begin at 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2 hour time limit expires
30. **Any tied games, in extra innings at the 2 hour mark, will be declared a tie.**

### F. Run Limits

31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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. However, the game does end (unless the game is tied) at 1-hour, 45 minutes with the last batter's at-bat concluding).

### G. Safety Rules

34. All players must remove ALL jewelry to be eligible to play. Taping over earrings is not allowed.
35. Face masks are strongly encouraged for infielders, especially Pitchers, first base and third base. Catchers must wear full protective gear plus they must have a throat guard on their catchers mask/helmet. The use of mouth guards is also encouraged for those in the field.
36. 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 *any* batter throws a bat that player will be called out.
37. If the defensive player blocks the base path without possession of the ball, the runner will be safe. The defensive player is not allowed to stand on or straddle the base path, a base or home plate unless they have possession of the ball.
38. USA rule on avoiding collisions states:
  - i. In an effort to prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched.