



12U SOFTBALL RULES OVERVIEW

Playing Field:

- 8' pitching circle radius, 60' baselines, 40' pitching distance, 7' x 3' batter's box

Equipment:

- 12-inch Softball
- All Official Softball Bats authorized by NHFS or any other softball national governing body unless decertified by those organizations are **LEGAL**.
- All bats must be unaltered official softball bats, round, no more than thirty-four inches (34") in length and not more than two and one-quarter inches (2 1/4") in diameter.
- A face shield is **REQUIRED** for **PITCHERS** and **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** for **INFIELDERS**.
- A face guard attached to the batting helmet is **REQUIRED** for play in all divisions.

Regulation Game:

- Time Limit = 1.5 hours (one hour and 30 minutes)
- Both teams have completed six (6) innings or the time limit has expired, and the visiting team scored more runs.

Run Rules: A game shall be called when a team is ahead by twelve (12) runs after three (3) innings, ten (10) runs after four (4) innings or eight (8) runs after five (5) innings. *12 run rule - does not apply if all batters have not batted

Offense:

- Nine (9) defensive players in the field.
- The dropped third strike rule is in effect: the catcher shall not be required to catch the third (3rd) strike, except for a foul tip, if first base is occupied with less than two (2) outs. The batter is called out and all base runners advance at their own risk.
- The catcher shall be required to catch the third (3rd) strike when there are two (2) outs or when first base is unoccupied. The batter may advance to first base with liability to being put out, either by the catcher touching the batter with the ball or throwing the ball to first base for the put out, if the catcher missed the third (3rd) strike. All other base runners advance at their own risk with liability to being put out.
- All players on every team must play at least three consecutive outs on defense in two innings (if possible based on time limits; the innings do not have to be consecutive) and complete one time at bat in each game played. A player who is injured may not participate in any game if they are unable to meet both the offensive and defensive participation requirements.
- A maximum of only seven (7) runs can be scored in each half inning, except the fifth inning in District and/or State Tournament play. After the fifth inning, the seven (7) run maximum is in force for the remainder of the game. Bunting and/or slapping is allowed.
- The fake bunt/swing away tactic will not be allowed. Once a batter squares to bunt, she may (1) Pull the bat back and take the pitch or (2) Attempt to bunt the ball. **PENALTY:** The umpire shall call the batter out.
- The Infield Fly rule is in effect.

The Infield Fly Rule: An Infield Fly is a fair fly ball (not a line drive or bunt) that, in the judgment of the umpire, can be caught by an infielder, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort and when there are runners on first and second or first, second, and third and less than two outs. When the umpire calls "infield fly" the batter is out, regardless of whether the ball is subsequently caught or dropped. The ball is live, and runners already on base may advance (at their own risk) if the ball is not caught or tag up and advance if it is caught.

Base Running:

- A "Courtesy Runner" may only be used for the pitcher AND catcher. The "Courtesy Runner" will be the last out made or, if no out has been recorded, the batter in the lineup farthest away from the batter who the "Courtesy Runner" is being used for. **NOTE:** If the player to be used as the "courtesy runner" is the pitcher or catcher, then the last out made prior to the last out will be used as the "courtesy runner"
- A baserunner may attempt to steal once the ball has left the pitcher's hand, on release. **PENALTY:** If a runner leaves the base before the pitcher releases the pitch, The runner shall be called out.

- A runner may not attempt a headfirst slide when attempting to reach the next base.
- The “Look Back Rule” shall apply in 12U DYS play after a team warning is given upon the first occurrence.
The Look Back Rule: The look-back rule is triggered when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitcher's circle and is not attempting to make a play on a runner (including a fake or threatened throw); any runner stopped on a base must stay on the base, and any runner not on a base must immediately either advance toward the next base or return to the previous base. Any subsequent change in direction or stop by the runner while off the base will result in the runner being called out, so long as the pitcher does not attempt to make a play.

Pitching Rules:

- Any pitcher can return to the pitching circle one (1) time at any point during a game.

NOTE: To satisfy this rule it will be ruled if a pitcher returns to the mound in the same inning of a game in which she was removed she shall be credited with pitching in ONLY one (1) inning for the inning in which she was removed.