

8u Rules

Age:

Players must be 8 years old or younger as of September 1, 2025. The separate league commissioners are responsible for verifying age prior to play and rosters, with birthdates, will be submitted before any games begin. Exceptions to the age cutoff will only occur if the league does not have an older team and a special evaluation committee approves. All approved exceptions will be listed on the game schedule google doc on a separate tab. If a coach has reason to doubt a player's age, they should ask the other coach for the player's name and DOB. Commissioners will be involved if needed. All exceptions will be approved by August 31, 2025.

Travel players:

This recreational program does not allow players currently rostered on a travel team through USSSA or USA to play. If a player was rostered on a USSSA or USA travel team in the preceding year, that player must play up a division for the current rec season. **Commissioners may petition the group to ask permission for a former C-level travel player to remain at their age group. No petition may be filed for a former A or B-level player.** Former USSSA or USA travel pitchers/catchers must wait one year in the rec program before playing those main positions again.

Note: we have received questions on CML players. The Central Maryland League (CML) is open to both recreational and travel teams. Any player rostered with a CML team is not considered a travel player for our purposes. CML players are allowed to play in this program, unless they are also rostered with USSSA or USA travel team as noted above.

Exception: From time to time, a local travel team is in need of guest players. We will allow recreational players to guest play for a "C-level" travel team up to two times during the rec season. These players will be added to a USSSA or USA travel team roster ONLY for the tournament weekend in which they guest play. Immediately following the tournament, the player must be removed from the USSSA or USA roster by the travel coach. The parents/guardians of the player are responsible for ensuring the player's removal once the guest playing is completed. Any player remaining on the travel roster after such a tournament will not be allowed to play in the next recreational game. All guest playing must be reported to the league commissioner and will be tracked on a separate tab in the game schedule google doc for coach review.

of Players:

A minimum of six players is required to start a game. Maximum number of players on the field is ten (four outfielders). There is no penalty to a team that loses a player during the game due to injury, leaving early, etc.

Game Length:

Complete the inning after 90 minutes. Drop dead time is 105 minutes. If drop dead is in effect and the last inning is not completed, the final score will revert back to the previous completed inning.

Umpires:

There are no umpires at this level. Coaches will call balls/strikes on their own batters from behind the pitcher in the field.

Pitching and run limits:

Pitching and runs per inning will follow this format:

Inning	Pitching Rules	Maximum Runs allowed
1st and 2nd innings	Coach Pitch	3
3rd and 4th innings	Kid Pitch	3
5th inning	Kid Pitch	Unlimited

Mercy rule will be 12/10/8 in innings 3/4/5

- Coach pitching rules (Innings 1 and 2)
 - The coach will pitch from the **8U pitching stripe (30 feet)**.
 - Each batter receives a maximum of **seven (7) total pitches**.
 - **No called strikes**; strikes are swinging only.
 - A batter is **out** if:
 - The batter swings and misses **three times**, or
 - The batter takes the **7th pitch**
 - If the batter **fouls off the 7th pitch**, the at-bat continues until one of the following occurs:
 - The ball is put into play
 - The batter swings and misses
 - The batter takes a pitch
- Kid-pitch rules (innings 3 through 5):
 - Each batter faces a kid pitcher until one of the following occurs:
 - The ball is hit into play
 - The batter strikes out
 - Ball 4 is reached
 - A hit by pitch counts as a **ball**.
 - The kid pitcher remains in position during foul balls and throughout the at-bat.
 - The coach will call balls and strikes on their own batters from behind the pitcher.
 - **Transition to Coach Pitch**
 - Once **Ball 4** is reached, a coach enters to finish the at-bat.
 - The coach will pitch from the **8U pitching stripe (30 feet)**.
 - Strikes **carry over** from kid pitch to coach pitch.
 - No walks may be issued during coach pitch.
 - **Coach Pitch Phase (After Ball 4)**
 - The coach is allowed up to **four (4) total pitches**.
 - The batter remains alive until one of the following occurs:
 - The ball is hit and put into play
 - The batter strikes out swinging
 - Four coach pitches are thrown
 - Foul balls keep the batter alive.

Stealing:

No stealing or leading allowed.

Advancing on base hits:

No advancing on overthrows.

Runners may advance on a hit to the outfield until the outfield gains possession of the ball. Once possession is gained, if the runner is not past the halfway mark to the next base, they must return to the previous base.

Dropped 3rd strike: Not in effect.

Infield fly: Not in effect.

Bunting: Not allowed

Dead ball: Runners may not advance once the ball is in possession within the pitching circle.

No metal spikes/cleats

NOTE: If these rules are silent to any specific softball rule not discussed above, the rules will default the most recent USSSA rule book.

10u Rules

Age:

Players must be 10 years old or younger as of September 1, 2025. The separate league commissioners are responsible for verifying age prior to play and rosters, with birthdates, will be submitted before any games begin. Exceptions to the age cutoff will only occur if the league does not have an older team and a special evaluation committee approves. All approved exceptions will be listed on the game schedule google doc on a separate tab. If a coach has reason to doubt a player's age, they should ask the other coach for the player's name and DOB. Commissioners will be involved if needed. All exceptions will be approved by August 31, 2025.

Travel players:

This recreational program does not allow players currently rostered on a travel team through USSSA or USA to play. If a player was rostered on a USSSA or USA travel team in the preceding year, that player must play up a division for the current rec season. **Commissioners may petition the group to ask permission for a former C-level travel player to remain at their age group. No petition may be filed for a former A or B-level player.** Former USSSA or USA travel pitchers/catchers must wait one year in the rec program before playing those main positions again.

Note: we have received questions on CML players. The Central Maryland League (CML) is open to both recreational and travel teams. Any player rostered with a CML team is not considered a travel player for our purposes. CML players are allowed to play in this program, unless they are also rostered with USSSA or USA travel team as noted above.

Exception: From time to time, a local travel team is in need of guest players. We will allow recreational players to guest play for a "C-level" travel team up to two times during the rec season. These players will be added to a USSSA or USA travel team roster ONLY for the tournament weekend in which they guest play. Immediately following the tournament, the player must be removed from the USSSA or USA roster by the travel coach. The parents/guardians of the player are responsible for ensuring the player's removal once the guest playing is completed. Any player remaining on the travel roster after such a tournament will not be allowed to play in the next recreational game. All guest playing must be reported to the league commissioner and will be tracked on a separate tab in the game schedule google doc for coach review.

of Players:

A minimum of seven players is required to start a game. Maximum number of players on the field is ten (four outfielders). There is no penalty to a team that loses a player during the game due to injury, leaving early, etc. Teams may play with seven players without the 8th and 9th position being declared an out when batting.

Game Length:

Complete the inning after 90 minutes or five innings. Home team bats only if behind in score. Drop dead time is 105 minutes. If drop dead is in effect, the final score will revert back to the previous inning.

Run Limit:

Innings 1 – 3: 4 runs

Innings 4 – 5: Unlimited

Mercy rule will be 12/10/8 in innings 3/4/5

Pitching (Hybrid method):

1. Kid-pitch from 35'.
2. After two walks in an inning, the batting team's coach will come in after ball four (ball four will be ignored and dropped from the count). The batter's strikes will carry over from kid pitch to coach pitch. The batting team's coach will complete the at bat to the point of hit or strike out. Depending on the count Coaches are permitted to throw three hittable pitches as ruled on by the umpire but not more than 5 total pitches. After five total pitches, if there is no hit and the batter has not already struck out, the batter is out. Note: if the batter fouls the fifth pitch, they are allowed another pitch. See examples below.

Examples:

Count is 3-0 when coach comes in. Coach throws three hittable pitches. This batter would either hit or strike out.

Count is 3-0 when the coach comes in. Coach throws two hittable pitches (count is now 3-2) and then two balls. The coach would have one more pitch to throw and the batter would either strike out or hit. If the fifth pitch is not hittable, the batter is still out (no walks). If the last pitch is a foul, the batter will continue batting for another pitch.

Count is 3-1 when the coach comes in. Coach throws one hittable pitch (count is now 3-2) and then three balls. The coach would have one more pitch to throw and the batter would either strike out or hit. If the fifth pitch is not hittable, the batter is still out (no walks). If the last pitch is a foul, the batter will continue batting for another pitch.

3. If a pitcher directly hits two batters in one inning, they are to be removed from pitching for the remainder of that inning, but they can return in another inning. Upon returning, if they directly hit two (2) more batters, they must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game. "Directly hitting" means that the ball hits the batter prior to touching the ground at all.
4. Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position 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 pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground. The pitcher's pivot foot can become airborne with one push from the pitcher's plate. However, pitchers will not be allowed to replant their pivot foot, resulting in pushing off from a second point and the pitcher being farther away from the pitcher's plate.
- 5.

Leads/stealing:

- Base runners may take a lead after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- Look-back rule is in effect: once the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the circle, the runner must immediately return to the base or attempt to proceed to the next base with the liability of being tagged out.
- Runners may only steal one base at a time.
- A ball that is out of play will result in the runners advancing one additional base.

- A batter that walks can only advance to first base and cannot make the turn and go to second.
- No stealing home.

Advancing on base hits:

Runners may advance until the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the pitching circle.

Dropped 3rd strike:

Not in effect.

Infield fly:

Not in effect.

Bunting:

Allowed but only off a kid-pitch

Dead ball:

Runners may not advance once the ball is in possession within the pitching circle. Runners can be tagged out attempting to advance or return to base. Play doesn't stop for players returning to the base.

Umpires:

- Leagues can decide whether or not to provide umpires for their home games. The home team will pay for the umpire.
- *In the event an umpire is not provided:* When at bat the 10U manager / assistant coach / parent from each team will umpire for their team. Home or away, doesn't matter as long as the umpire is from the team that's hitting. This should eliminate any issues with coaches calling balls/strikes/outs for another team

No metal spikes/cleats

NOTE: If these rules are silent to any specific softball rule not discussed above, the rules will default the most recent USSSA rule book.

12u Rules

Age:

Players must be 12 years old or younger as of September 1, 2025. The separate league commissioners are responsible for verifying age prior to play and rosters, with birthdates, will be submitted before any games begin. Exceptions to the age cutoff will only occur if the league does not have an older team and a special evaluation committee approves. All approved exceptions will be listed on the game schedule google doc on a separate tab. If a coach has reason to doubt a player's age, they should ask the other coach for the player's name and DOB. Commissioners will be involved if needed. All exceptions will be approved by August 31, 2025.

Travel players:

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Note: we have received questions on CML players. The Central Maryland League (CML) is open to both recreational and travel teams. Any player rostered with a CML team is not considered a travel player for our purposes. CML players are allowed to play in this program, unless they are also rostered with USSSA or USA travel team as noted above.

Exception: From time to time, a local travel team is in need of guest players. We will allow recreational players to guest play for a "C-level" travel team up to two times during the rec season. These players will be added to a USSSA or USA travel team roster ONLY for the tournament weekend in which they guest play. Immediately following the tournament, the player must be removed from the USSSA or USA roster by the travel coach. The parents/guardians of the player are responsible for ensuring the player's removal once the guest playing is completed. Any player remaining on the travel roster after such a tournament will not be allowed to play in the next recreational game. All guest playing must be reported to the league commissioner and will be tracked on a separate tab in the game schedule google doc for coach review.

of Players:

A minimum of eight players is required to start a game. Maximum number of players on the field is nine. There is no penalty to a team that loses a player during the game due to injury, leaving early, etc. Teams may play with eight players without the 9th position being declared an out when batting.

Game Length:

Complete the inning after 90 minutes or seven innings. Home team bats only if behind in score. Drop dead time is 105 minutes.

Run Limit:

Innings 1 – 3: 4 runs

Innings 4 – 7: Unlimited

Mercy rule will be 12/10/8 in innings 3/4/5

Run ahead rule is in effect: The game will conclude if the run difference is 15 runs or more after three innings, 12 runs or more after 4 innings, or 10 runs or more after 5 innings.

Pitching:

- 100% kid-pitch from 40'.
- Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position 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 pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground. The pitcher's pivot foot can become airborne with one push from the pitcher's plate. However, pitchers will not be allowed to replant their pivot foot, resulting in pushing off from a second point and the pitcher being farther away from the pitcher's plate.
- If a pitcher directly hits two batters in one inning, they are to be removed from pitching for the remainder of that inning, but they can return in another inning. Upon returning, if they directly hit two (2) more batters, they must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game. "Directly hitting" means that the ball hits the batter prior to touching the ground at all.

Leads/stealing:

- Base runners may take a lead after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- Once the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the circle, the runner must immediately return to the base or attempt to proceed to the next base with the liability of being tagged out.
- Stealing home is allowed.

Advancing on base hits:

Runners may advance until the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the pitching circle.

Dropped 3rd strike:

In effect if:

- One out or less and first based is not occupied.
- Two outs, batter may advance regardless of first base being occupied.

Infield fly:

In effect.

Bunting:

Allowed

Dead ball:

Runners may not advance once the ball is in possession within the pitching circle. Runners can be tagged out attempting to advance or return to base. Play doesn't stop for players returning to the base.

Umpires:

The home team will provide an umpire and will cover the cost.

No metal spikes/cleats

NOTE: If these rules are silent to any specific softball rule not discussed above, the rules will default the most recent USSSA rule book.

13u+ Rules

Age:

Players must be 18 years old or younger as of September 1, 2025. The separate league commissioners are responsible for verifying age prior to play and rosters, with birthdates, will be submitted before any games begin. Exceptions to the age cutoff will only occur if the league does not have an older team and a special evaluation committee approves. All approved exceptions will be listed on the game schedule google doc on a separate tab. If a coach has reason to doubt a player's age, they should ask the other coach for the player's name and DOB. Commissioners will be involved if needed. All exceptions will be approved by August 31, 2025.

Travel players:

This recreational program does not allow players currently rostered on a travel team through USSSA or USA to play. If a player was rostered on a USSSA or USA travel team in the preceding year, that player must play up a division for the current rec season. **Commissioners may petition the group to ask permission for a former C-level travel player to remain at their age group. No petition may be filed for a former A or B-level player.** Former USSSA or USA travel pitchers/catchers must wait one year in the rec program before playing those main positions again.

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Exception: From time to time, a local travel team is in need of guest players. We will allow recreational players to guest play for a "C-level" travel team up to two times during the rec season. These players will be added to a USSSA or USA travel team roster ONLY for the tournament weekend in which they guest play. Immediately following the tournament, the player must be removed from the USSSA or USA roster by the travel coach. The parents/guardians of the player are responsible for ensuring the player's removal once the guest playing is completed. Any player remaining on the travel roster after such a tournament will not be allowed to play in the next recreational game. All guest playing must be reported to the league commissioner and will be tracked on a separate tab in the game schedule google doc for coach review.

of Players:

A minimum of seven players is required to start a game. Maximum number of players on the field is nine. There is no penalty to a team that loses a player during the game due to injury, leaving early, etc. Teams may play with seven players without the 8th or 9th position being declared an out when batting.

Game Length:

Complete the inning after 90 minutes or seven innings. Home team bats only if behind in score. Drop dead time is 115 minutes.

Run Limit:

Innings 1 – 3: 4 runs

Innings 4 – 7: Unlimited

Mercy rule will be 12/10/8 in innings 3/4/5

Run ahead rule is in effect: The game will conclude if the run difference is 12 runs lead after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs lead after 5 innings.

Pitching:

- 100% kid-pitch from 43'.
- Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position 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 pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.
- If a pitcher directly hits two batters in one inning, they are to be removed from pitching for the remainder of that inning, but they can return in another inning. Upon returning, if they directly hit two (2) more batters, they must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game. "Directly hitting" means that the ball hits the batter prior to touching the ground at all.

Leads/stealing:

- Base runners may take a lead after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- Once the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the circle, the runner must immediately return to the base or attempt to proceed to the next base with the liability of being tagged out.
- Stealing home is allowed.

Advancing on base hits:

Runners may advance until the ball is in the pitcher's possession within the pitching circle.

Dropped 3rd strike:

In effect if:

- One out or less and first based is not occupied.
- Two outs, batter may advance regardless of first base being occupied.

Infield fly:

In effect.

Bunting:

Allowed

Dead ball:

Runners may not advance once the ball is in possession within the pitching circle. Runners can be tagged out attempting to advance or return to base. Play doesn't stop for players returning to the base.

Umpires:

The home team will provide an umpire and will cover the cost.

No metal spikes/cleats

NOTE: If these rules are silent to any specific softball rule not discussed above, the rules will default the most recent USSSA rule book.