

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:

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 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.