

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.