

**MARIN GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE (MGSL)**  
**USA Softball Rule Modifications – Local Rules –**  
**Updated March 15, 2024 (new changes for 2024 highlighted)**  
**15u, 12u, 10u, 8u & 6u Divisions**

USA Softball (FKA ASA) recommends age appropriate rule modifications for local youth softball leagues. MGSL board of directors has approved the following modifications to the *Official Rules of Softball* as published by USA Softball. It is the responsibility of each coach to be familiar with both USA Softball official and MGSL local rules.

The modifications have been made in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- ◆ Assist young players’ softball skill development
- ◆ Enable a greater number of players to participate
- ◆ Reduce the risk of injury
- ◆ Help each game progress at an appropriate pace

**ALL DIVISIONS**

The following additions and exceptions apply to all divisions of play in MGSL except where noted.

**Article 501—ELIGIBILITY**

MGSL is comprised of 5 divisions of play: 15u, 12u, 10u, 8u and 6u. A player’s birth year and age on September 1 determines the division in which the player is eligible to play. Exceptions can be granted by the District Committee for a player to “play up” in an older division or “play down” to a younger division.

Play-down requests will be reviewed by the Rules & Conduct Committee Chairperson. Play-downs will only be granted in cases of mental, physical, or medical conditions; no friend requests.

A request form will be posted on the MGSL website and Districts will submit their requests to the Committee Chair before the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in Feb. The decision of the Chair/Committee will be final.

A birth year chart to determine eligibility will be published each season by MGSL.

**Game Day Call-ups:** In an attempt to make it easier to field a team, the Board has authorized game-day call-ups. The coach of a team with insufficient players is allowed to obtain players from a lower division MGSL team to add to the roster for a single game (e.g. a 15u team can call-up a 12u player). The call-up must be from within the team’s own District. For all games and for the purposes of this rule, insufficient players shall mean less than 9 players total. Call-ups are allowed only for the team to reach a maximum of 9 players. The minimum number to avoid a forfeit is 8 in 15u/12u, 7 in 10u. This rule applies to both regular season and playoffs. Any such call-ups must be arranged through the coach of the younger player. It is understandable that a coach will try to call-up the best available players and to fill a skill position, like pitching or catching, to compensate for a missing player. However, the Districts are charged with the responsibility to devise a system such that the honor of “playing up” is not limited to only one or a few younger players. A player who is called up to pitch in a higher division shall be subject to the pitching limits for their regular division of play (i.e. a 10u player who is called up to play in a 12u game is still subject to a three inning pitching limit).

Missing an at bat During the regular season, if a player leaves early from a game for injury or for another reason (i.e. another event), the player's spot in the batting order is skipped and is NOT recorded as an out. However, as stated in the MGS rules, any time you fall below the required minimum number of players for your division, the game is forfeited.

Please note, this rule differs from USA Softball Official Rules because our recreational leagues are required to have all players bat in the batting order, there are no substitutions available for batters.

For the All-Star tournament, USA Softball Rules are enforced and if a player leaves a game early (for any reason) it will result in an out if her spot in the batting order is skipped.

During the playoffs only, in case of an injury or any other reason that a player cannot complete their at bat NOT caused by a hit by pitch, this batter is recorded as an out. The player's coach must inform the ump as soon as it's known the player cannot bat, the umpire must inform the other team.

### **Rule 3—EQUIPMENT**

Facemasks - batting All batting helmets used by a team must have an approved facemask (including any personal helmets belonging to a player). Facemasks approved for use in MGSL events shall be designed for softball use and of a compatible size and shape for the helmet to which they are attached. They shall be in good condition and firmly attached to the helmet with all attachment points tight.

On the batting team, all players on the field must wear a helmet with approved facemask, including batters, runners, on-deck batters, and player-base coaches.

Facemasks – pitching Facemasks are mandatory for pitchers in all MGSL events when pitching is live (batter is up, game or practice). They are not required during warm up pitches. The facemask must have a non-glare outer surface. During games, the umpire is responsible for enforcing this rule.

Gloves – pitching Pitchers gloves may be multicolored BUT may not contain any yellow or white coloring. (No colors of the ball being used in the game)

Facemasks - infield Facemasks are strongly recommended for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base position players.

Mouth Guards Mouth guards are strongly recommended for all players.

Wearing of Jewelry Hard stone or metal jewelry, including earrings and necklaces, may not be worn during games or practices and must be removed prior to taking the field for any game or practice. "Taping" is not acceptable as an alternative to removal of the jewelry. An exception is made for Medical Alert bracelets, which do not count as jewelry. These bracelets must be taped to the body in such a way that the Medical Alert information is visible. For the purposes of this rule, fabric, twine, or woven

plastic bracelets (“friendship bracelets”) also do not count as jewelry and may be worn if judged by the umpire to not be dangerous. This is a serious safety issue and umpires and coaches will be responsible for enforcement of this rule.

Cleats Metal cleats or spikes are not allowed in MGSL at any age level.

**Rule 5—THE GAME (15u, 12u, 10u):**

**Complete Games:** Regular season games will be considered “complete and official” as long as at least two full innings have been played. If two full innings are not completed (rained out, called for darkness, etc.), the game will be scored a tie. Playoff games are considered complete if 4 innings or 90 minutes have been played. If a playoff game is rained out before 4 innings or 90 minutes are completed, the game must be played over. Pitching limits are not affected if a playoff game is rained out. Championship games must reach 7 innings to be considered complete.

Forfeit Time If a team does not have the minimum number required to play by game time, they shall forfeit the game.

Game Start Time The game “start time” is defined as the end of the coach/umpire meeting at home plate. The umpire should (loudly) call out the game start time. To be clear, the start time is not when the home team takes the field, it is not at the first warm up pitch, it is not at the first pitch. The game start time is at the end of the coach/umpire meeting at home plate.

All games should have a visible timer to help alleviate any issues or disputes related to game time. Umpires will start the game time and mount a timer on the fence for all to see. Game time expires at sound of the alarm, but the official game time is managed by the umpire, which may take into account stoppage time. Timers are to be provided by the districts at every field. If a game does not have a visible clock mounted, please request that it is utilized. If one is not available, please report back to your district leadership so they can make sure timers are provided for future games.

Run Rule In a regular season game, if prior to either 7 innings or 90 minutes the run rule has been met, the game is complete. The Run Rule is a 15 run differential after 3 innings; a 12 run differential after 4 innings; or an 8 run differential after 5 innings. If the run rule is invoked after the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning, and the losing team has not had a chance to bat all players, the umpire verifies if all players have not bat, and the game is called officially over by the umpire. The team continues to bat through the lineup until those remaining players have had an at bat. The score does not change if runs are scored.

The Run Rule also applies to playoff and championship games.

**Rule 10, Section 9, A—UMPIRES (DISPARAGING or DISRUPTIVE CHEERS or REMARKS)**

Before each game, umpires shall give notice to the coach of each team that it is the coach’s duty to make sure that cheering by players, coaches, and spectators is exclusively supportive of player performance.

Umpires shall not permit teams and individuals (players, coaches, and spectators) to intentionally “cheer” or behave in a manner that is, *in the umpire’s judgment*, intended to taunt, tease, humiliate, distract, annoy, or otherwise impair the performance of a member of the opposing team. Examples are:

- ◆ Cheers that focus on a bad pitch, a batter’s failure, a fielding or base running error,
- ◆ Cheers (screams or noises) that are timed to disrupt a pitcher, hitter, or fielder,
- ◆ Cheers that in any way refer to the other team or its players in a negative way.

A coach must bring his/her concern about such behavior to the umpire’s attention. If the umpire has not heard the alleged behavior, he/she must report the complaint to the other coach. If, in the umpire’s judgment there has been a sportsmanship violation, the umpire must warn the coach of the offending team or the spectator. If there is a second offense, the umpire may eject any persons or players responsible. Ejected players may, at the discretion of the coach, remain in the dugout unless the umpire disagrees. A third offense will result in forfeit by the offending team.

**Intent:** Although many high school and travel ball teams use orchestrated cheers, movements and sounds to negatively influence their opponent’s performance, this kind of behavior is not consistent with the purposes of our league. MGSL bylaws, as adopted by the Board of Directors, place a high value on promoting sportsmanship, instilling the desire to win or lose fairly, and to improve player skills with acceptable behavior.

**Rule 7, Section 4—BATTING (Point of Emphasis 9-Check Swing/Bunt Strike)**

**Bunt Strikes**                    If a batter assumes a bunting position and extends her bat across the plate prior to the pitcher releasing the ball, she will be considered to have attempted to hit the ball and a strike will be called unless the batter removes her bat from the strike zone or obviously attempts to remove her bat from the strike zone at the time the pitch crosses the plate. If she moves into a bunt position and extends her bat into the strike zone while the pitch is in the air, she will be considered to have attempted to hit the ball and a strike will be called.

**Intent:** This is intended to prevent a coach from sending the entire lineup (good and not so good hitters alike) up to the plate, assuming the bunt position, and making no attempt whatsoever to hit the ball thus drawing a potentially large number of walks and frustrating the pitcher. This also is intended to force the batters to make an active determination of balls and strikes to further their development as hitters.

**Rule 8, Section 10—BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER**

**Courtesy Runners**            Unless there are 2 outs, courtesy runners shall not be used for the pitcher or catcher.

**Rule 6—SUBSTITUTES**

**Injured Runner**            If a batter-runner or runner is injured on a play, she must make it to the base on her own unless her injury is the result of being hit by a pitch. A substitute runner is permitted to replace the injured player on the bases until the runner is out or has scored. The substitute runner shall be the last player to make an out.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Time Delays** It is the obligation of the coach, at the time of what s/he perceives to be undue delay (e.g., pitching change, player injury, appeal, rules dispute), to request that the umpire add an appropriate amount of time to the remainder of the game. It is entirely within the umpire's judgment whether or not to grant a request for added time. This rule does not apply to 8us. The right to appeal for more time is lost as soon as the next pitch has been thrown.
- Intent:** To discourage coaches from unnecessarily delaying games in order to have time elapse or the time-limit expire to their team's benefit.
- Timeouts** In 12u & 15u games, the umpires will stop the game clock during timeouts to ensure that timeouts are not used to unfairly advantage one team. In the event that an umpire does not stop the clock or forgets to restart the clock during a timeout, the umpire will use their best judgment as to the amount of time added to the game.
- Intent:** Time outs called by coaches are an important opportunity to talk to teams about specific game situations. Unfortunately, they are also often used to delay a game, so that a team with a lead can ensure time ends before the opposing team has an opportunity to score more runs. While this strategy is common in travel ball, high school, and college programs, it is deemed by MGSL to not be in the best interests of the goals and objectives of this rec program.
- Coaches** Any coach who is on the field of play or in the dugout area is required to meet Marin Girls Softball coaching requirements and certifications. More information on requirements and certifications are detailed on the Marin Girls Softball website under the 'Coaches Corner'.
- Coaches must adhere to the USA rule and not be in the field of play during the game. Sitting on buckets outside the dugout in foul territory is prohibited. Coaches can be in the dugout or outside the field of play behind the fence or behind the dugout fence line (Bernard Hoffman exception). (10u, 12u and 15u only)
- Charged Conferences** **Offense:** There shall be no more than one charged conference between team representatives and the batter, another team representative, and/or runners in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences in excess of one in an inning. (per USA rules)
- Defense:** There shall be only three charged conferences between a manager/coach or other team representatives from the dugout with any defensive players in a seven-inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning between a manager/coach or other team representatives from the dugout with any defensive players. (per ASA rules)
- Batters Hit By Pitches** It is the duty of the umpire to maximize the safety of MGSL players. When a pitcher has hit 3 batters in a single game, the umpire must make a decision as

to whether or not the pitcher should be ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the game. *It is entirely within the umpire's judgment* to decide whether or not there is a danger to the batters. If, after two batters have been struck, the umpire believes the pitcher's inaccuracy, pitching speed, the type of ball, and the skill level of the batters pose a substantial danger, the umpire must inform the defensive coach that the pitcher may be replaced if another batter is struck by a pitch. Batters must make an attempt to avoid being hit. If the pitcher is replaced, she is not removed from the game and may play any other defensive position. She may not, however return to the pitcher position for the remainder of the game. Before issuing a warning or removing a pitcher, umpires should take into account the totality of the circumstances. For instance, if a pitcher who is one of the fastest at her age level has struck 3 batters, inflicting significant pain to one or two, the umpire may be justified in replacing her. On the other hand, if a very slow pitcher has struck 3 players who immediately ran to first base without any apparent pain, the pitcher should not necessarily be replaced.

Batting Cages	Batting cages can be used before games. If a batting cage is available to a home team, the cage should be offered to the visiting team, provided the visiting team arrives at the field with adequate time remaining before game time.
Infield Warm ups	Infield warm ups are not allowed before a game. The use of foul territory for fielding drills is permitted.
Umpires Calls	The only appeal plays the Umpire will rule on are missing a base, leaving a base too early when tagging up and batting out of order. All other calls are final. There are no game protests allowed.
Standings	The standings for the season will be determined by win/loss record for each team. In the event that at the end of the season, two or more teams have the same win/loss record, the order shall be determined by the following methodology: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Wins/losses.</li><li>2. Head to head.</li><li>3. Runs against.</li><li>4. Coin toss.</li></ol>

## **15u DIVISION – LOCAL RULES**

[Includes High School Freshmen not playing for their school team]

### **RULE 2—THE PLAYING FIELD**

*Pitching Distance*      43 FEET from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. (per USA Softball)

### **RULE 3—EQUIPMENT**

*Softball: Size, Color;* All games shall be played with an 12-inch, optic yellow USA Softball approved fastpitch softball. (as USA Softball)

### **RULE 4—PLAYERS and SUBSTITUTES**

- Batting Order**            All players shall bat in the order, whether or not they are playing defense.  
*Note:* Coaches must include all players in the batting order at the beginning of the game. Any players who arrive late must be added at the end of the batting order. For example: If 10 players are present at the beginning of the game, the lineup presented to the umpire must contain 10 players. If an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> player arrive later, during the game, their names must be added to the batting order in places 11 and 12.
- Number of Players on Defense**      The defense shall be comprised of 9 players.  
*Note:* Before each pitch, outfielders must be positioned at least 10 feet behind the baselines between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Nothing in this rule prohibits an outfielder from covering a base, taking part in a rundown, or otherwise making a play in the infield.
- Last Batter Option**      There is no last-batter rule in 15u, and no maximum number of batters per inning.
- Re-entry**                    Unlimited substitutions are permitted for defensive positions. Substitute runners may not be substituted for players unless there has been an injury. In the event of any injury to a base runner, the player who made the last out shall be substituted for the injured runner. Pitchers are no longer required to stay on the field to re-enter. Pitchers have the same re-entry rights as all other players. They continue to have pitching limits with re-entry.
- Number of Players**            To avoid forfeit, a team must field at least 8 players on defense, whenever the team takes the field. No automatic out is assessed when the 9<sup>th</sup> place in the batting order is due up. Any time you fall below the 8 players, the game is forfeited. You cannot start a game with 8 players and then continue with 7 or less.  
  
*Note:* In the event of a forfeit, teams should play, or continue to play the game as an unofficial practice game so that the attending players do not miss the opportunity to gain game experience.

Batting Order	<p>All players shall bat in the order, whether or not they are playing defense.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Coaches must include all players in the batting order at the beginning of the game. Any players who arrive late must be added at the end of the batting order. For example: If 10 players are present at the beginning of the game, the lineup presented to the umpire must contain 10 players. If an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> player arrive later, during the game, their names must be added to the batting order in places 11 and 12.</p>
Pitching limit	<p>During the regular season, pitchers will be limited to 4 innings per game.</p> <p>The pitching limit will be waived in the event that the game goes to an extra inning. An extra inning is played if the game ends in a tie, either after the 90 minutes have elapsed, or after 7 innings have been completed prior to the expiration of the 90 minute time limit.</p> <p>A pitching inning is defined as at least one pitch in an inning.</p> <p><b><i>A proven violation of this rule will result in the forfeit of any game in which the pitcher pitched in excess of the permitted number of innings.</i></b> Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the pitching limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of playoffs. Appeals shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.</p> <p>For all playoff and championship games, there are no pitching limits.</p>
Defensive Play Requirement	<p>All Players must play defense. No player shall sit out for more than one inning on defense. If the game goes enough innings, no player shall sit out for <u>more than 1</u> inning on defense until all players have sat out for 1 inning. There is no requirement for a player to play an infield position.</p> <p><b><i>A proven violation of this rule will result in the forfeit of any game in which players sit out for more than 1 inning on defense before all players have sat out for 1 inning.</i></b> Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the sitting limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of playoffs and shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.</p> <p><b><i>If the violation occurs during the playoffs, coaches must inform the umpire immediately with proof of the violation.</i></b></p>
15u Pitcher Rotation Adjustment	<p>At the 15u level only a coach will have the discretion to use their pitcher's 4 inning limit whenever they would like.</p> <p>The pitcher will not be held to the same "must sit once before anyone sits twice" rule as long as they are kept in the game for their 4 inning limit in consecutive innings (or potentially 2 or 3 innings as well based on team size).</p>

The pitcher may complete her 4 inning pitching limit before she has to sit for an inning if she is completing these 4 innings consecutively. Meaning that if the pitcher is pitching 4 innings in a row to meet her 4 inning limit she can do so without having to sit for an inning regardless of how many players are on the team.

As soon as a pitcher comes out of the game she must then adhere to the “must sit” rule regardless of when she comes out of the game. If a pitcher completes her 4 innings consecutively and she should have been made to sit by that inning she will then need to sit for the first inning she is out of the game. When a player sits depends on the size of the team’s roster.

If the pitcher comes out after 3 innings and should have been on the bench at that point she must adhere to the rule immediately. A pitcher cannot avoid having to adhere to the must sit rule solely based on the coach manipulating when the pitcher pitches her 4 innings. As soon as the pitcher is out of the game she must adhere to the must sit rule, and if she should have previously or needs to immediately sit for an inning she must do so as she is no longer a pitcher at that point. The pitcher must sit for a full inning, which is defined as three outs all occurring in the same inning. They cannot come out of the game with 2 outs in the inning, sit for only 1 out, and count that as her inning to sit.

Any single pitch in an inning counts as a full inning. This has not changed from the previous rule. Coaches may not use 1 out in one inning and 2 outs in another inning and call that a single inning because it is 3 outs. One single pitch in any inning counts as a full inning.

The pitching limit at 15u remains the same 4 inning limit. This rule modification only alters WHEN the 4 innings can be used, it does not increase a pitcher’s available innings.

## **RULE 5—THE GAME**

### **Time Limit**

Games will last 7 innings or 90 minutes, whichever occurs first, unless the run rule has been triggered (see below). Unless there is a tie, no new inning may start after 90 minutes, based on the umpire’s timekeeping device. A new inning starts immediately after the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is called by the umpire, not when the defensive team is ready.

If a game is tied after the completion of regulation play, one more inning will be played and the game will then be declared over and complete.

Championship games will last 7 innings, with no time limit. Ties after regulation play in playoff and championship games are played according to International Tie-Breaker Rule as follows: Starting with the first extra inning of play, and each half inning thereafter, the offense begins with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that inning on 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

## **RULE 10—UMPIRES**

- Appeal Plays            The only appeal plays the Umpire will rule on are missing a base, leaving a base too early when tagging up and batting out of order. All other calls are final.
- No-shows                If no umpire has arrived for the beginning of a 15u game and there is a 12u game scheduled for the same time at an adjacent field with an umpire present, the umpire scheduled for the 12u game shall umpire for the 15u game. If the adjacent game is a 10u, the umpire can be requested to move but if he/she is not experienced with the 15u division, he/she may refuse.
- If no umpire is available, coaches must find someone to umpire any game for which no substitute is available. Games will not be rescheduled because of an umpire no-show. Coaches must play the game and agree upon some mutually acceptable umpiring situation.

## **12u DIVISION - LOCAL RULES**

### **RULE 2—THE PLAYING FIELD**

*Pitching Distance*      40 FEET from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. (per USA Softball)

### **RULE 3—EQUIPMENT**

*Softball: Size, Color;* All games shall be played with an 12-inch, optic yellow USA Softball approved fastpitch softball. (as per USA Softball)

### **RULE 4—PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES**

**Batting Order**            All players shall bat in the order, whether or not they are playing defense.

*Note:* Coaches must include all players in the batting order at the beginning of the game. Any players who arrive late must be added at the end of the batting order. For example: If 10 players are present at the beginning of the game, the lineup presented to the umpire must contain 10 players. If an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> player arrive later, during the game, their names must be added to the batting order in places 11 and 12.

**Number of Players on Defense**      The defense shall be comprised of 10 players, 4 of whom are outfielders.

*Note:* Before each pitch, outfielders must be positioned at least 10 feet behind the baselines between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Nothing in this rule prohibits an outfielder from covering a base, taking part in a rundown, or otherwise making a play in the infield.

**Last Batter Option**      There is no last-batter rule in 12u, and no maximum number of batters per inning.

**Re-entry**                    Unlimited substitutions are permitted for defensive positions. Substitute runners may not be substituted for players unless there has been an injury. In the event of any injury to a base runner, the player who made the last out shall be substituted for the injured runner. Pitchers are no longer required to stay on the field to re-enter. Pitchers have the same re-entry rights as all other players. They continue to have pitching limits with re-entry.

**Number of players**            To avoid forfeit, a team must field at least 8 players on defense, whenever the team takes the field. No automatic out is assessed when the 9<sup>th</sup> place in the batting order is due up. Any time you fall below the 8 players, the game is forfeited. You cannot start a game with 8 players and then continue with 7 or less.

*Note:* In the event of a forfeit, teams should play, or continue to play the game as an unofficial practice game so that the attending players do not miss the opportunity to gain game experience.

Defensive play requirement

All Players must play defense. No player shall sit out for more than one inning on defense. If the game goes enough innings, no player shall sit out for more than 1 inning on defense until all players have sat out for 1 inning. There is no requirement for a player to play an infield position.

***A proven violation of this rule will result in the forfeit of any game in which players sit out for more than 1 inning on defense before all players have sat out for 1 inning.*** Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the sitting limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of playoffs and shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.

If the violation occurs during the playoffs, coaches must inform the umpire immediately with proof of the violation.

Pitching limits

No pitcher can pitch more than 4 innings per game. Any pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched. The pitching limit will be waived in the event that the game goes to an extra inning. An extra inning is played if the game ends in a tie, either after the 90 minutes have elapsed, or after 7 innings have been completed prior to the expiration of the 90 minute time limit.

***A proven violation of this rule will result in the forfeit of any game in which the pitcher pitched in excess of the permitted number of innings.*** Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the pitching limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of playoffs. Appeals shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.

For all playoff and championship games, there are no pitching limits.

## **RULE 5—THE GAME**

Time Limit

Games will last 7 innings or 90 minutes, whichever occurs first, unless the run rule has been triggered (see below). Unless there is a tie, no new inning may start after 90 minutes, based on the umpire's timekeeping device. A new inning starts immediately after the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is called by the umpire, not when the defensive team is ready.

If a game is tied after the completion of regulation play, one more inning will be played and the game will then be declared over and complete.

Championship games will last 7 innings, with no time limit. Ties after regulation play in playoff and championship games are played according to International Tie-Breaker Rule as follows: Starting with the first extra inning of play, and each half inning thereafter, the offense begins with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that inning on 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

## **RULE 8—BATTER-RUNNER & RUNNER**

- Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike      A batter may attempt to advance to first base when the catcher fails to catch the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike. If first base is occupied and there are less than two outs, the batter will be called out regardless of if the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike was caught by the catcher or not (as per USA Softball).
- Thrown Bat              Umpires shall exercise their judgment when batters throw the bat after hitting the ball. A warning is appropriate for a first offense and an out may be assessed in instances where the second offense is judged to be flagrant or dangerous.
- Dead ball                Whether or not a runner may advance on a dead ball shall be solely at the discretion of the umpire.
- Runners' advance      USA Softball Rule 8.7.T (Look Back Rule) applies.
- Note:** The ball in the pitcher's circle does not stop the runners' advance as in the 10u. However, the runner has many responsibilities associated with this rule and coaches should make every effort to instruct their players in these important base running rules.
- Stealing                 Stealing of all bases is permitted, including home. Runners may leave the base as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. (as per USA Softball)
- Sliding – contact      The runner must either slide, try to avoid a tag, or avoid a collision with a defensive player at any base. Crashing into a defensive player or failing to slide or otherwise avoid contact is an out. The umpire's judgment prevails.

## **RULE 10—UMPIRES**

- Appeal Plays            The only appeal plays the Umpire will rule on are missing a base, leaving a base too early when tagging up and batting out of order. All other calls are final.
- No-shows                If no umpire has arrived for the beginning of a 12u game and there is a 10u/10u game scheduled for the same time at an adjacent field with an umpire present, the umpire scheduled for the 10u game should umpire for the 12u. Likewise, if there is an adjacent 15u game without an umpire, the umpire from the 12u should umpire for the 15u if trained to do so.
- If no umpire is available, coaches must find someone to umpire any game for which no substitute is available. Games will not be rescheduled because of an umpire no-show. Coaches must play the game and agree upon some mutually acceptable umpiring situation.

## **10u DIVISION - LOCAL RULES**

### **RULE 2—THE PLAYING FIELD**

*Pitching Distance* 35 FEET from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. (per USA Softball)

### **RULE 3—EQUIPMENT**

*Softball: Size, Color* All games shall be played with an 11 inch, optic yellow, USA Softball approved fastpitch softball. (note: this is a hardball, not the soft "incrediball") (as per USA Softball)

### **RULE 4—PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES**

*Batting Order* All players shall bat in the order, whether or not they are playing defense.  
*Note:* Coaches must include all players in the batting order at the beginning of the game. Any players who arrive late must be added at the end of the batting order. For example: If 10 players are present at the beginning of the game, the lineup presented to the umpire must contain 10 players. If an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> player arrive later, during the game, their names must be added to the batting order in places 11 and 12.

*Number of Players on Defense* The defense shall be comprised of 10 players, 4 of whom are outfielders.  
*Note:* Before each pitch, outfielders must be positioned at least 10 feet behind the baselines between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Nothing in this rule prohibits an outfielder from covering a base, taking part in a rundown, fielding a hit ball, or otherwise making a play in the infield.

*Re-entry* Unlimited substitutions are permitted for defensive positions. Pitchers are no longer required to stay on the field to re-enter. Pitchers have the same re-entry rights as all other players. They continue to have pitching limits with re-entry. Substitute runners may not be used unless there has been an injury. When a base runner is injured, the player who made the last out may be used as a substitute runner.

*Pitching limits* No pitcher can pitch more than 3 innings per game. Any pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched. The pitching limit does not apply to an extra inning due to a tie.

Pitchers may pitch 4 innings in playoff games. There is no pitching limit in the championship game.

***A proven violation of this rule will result in the forfeit of any game in which the pitcher pitched in excess of the permitted number of innings.*** Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the pitching limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of

playoffs. Appeals shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.

**Walk Rule**

There is no longer a walk rule for 10u. All pitches are to be thrown by rostered players (no adult pitchers allowed). First base will be awarded to the batter after 4 balls or if they are hit by a pitch. A batter hit by pitch will not have the option to keep hitting and must take their base. A batter who is walked will be awarded first base but is not allowed to advance beyond first base until the next pitch is thrown.

**Minimum number of players**

To avoid forfeit, a team must field at least 7 players on defense, whenever the team takes the field. No automatic out is assessed when the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> places in the batting order are due up. Any time you fall below the 7 players, the game is forfeited. You cannot start a game with 7 players and then continue with 6 or less.

*Note:* In the event of a forfeit, teams should play, or continue to play the game as an unofficial practice game so that the attending players do not miss the opportunity to gain game experience.

**Defensive Play Requirement**

Each player must play an infield position for at least one full inning by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. All Players must play defense. No player shall sit out for more than one inning on defense. If the game goes enough innings, no player shall sit out for more than 1 inning on defense until all players have sat out for 1 inning.

***A proven violation of this rule will result in a forfeit.*** Opposing coaches shall inform the umpire as soon as they realize the sitting limit violation. Appeals of this rule shall be permitted at any time prior to the beginning of playoffs and shall be decided by the MGSL Board of Directors after full investigation of all pertinent facts.

If the violation occurs during the playoffs, coaches must inform the umpire immediately with proof of the violation.

**Defensive Coach**

One coach may be on the field (in the outfield, no closer than 15 feet from the baseline between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**10u 5-run max per ½ inning rule**

There will be a 5-run maximum allowable runs per ½ inning, under the following scenarios:

Team A is in the lead, going into their at-bat:

- Team A may only score 5 runs.
- For example: if the ½ inning started at 8-1, it is terminated if the score gets to 13-1 team A leading ½ innings ends immediately once that 5th run is scored.

Team A is in the lead, going into a half-inning where team B is at the plate:

- Team B may tie it up, AND THEN ONLY GO AHEAD BY 5.
- For example: if the ½ inning started with team A leading 8-1, team B may tie it up at 8 and then the inning is terminated if the score gets to 13-8 team B leading.

## **RULE 5—THE GAME**

**Time limit** Games will last 7 innings or 90 minutes, whichever occurs first, unless the Run Rule has been triggered (see below). As per USA rules, there will be no more than three offensive or defensive timeouts/player conferences called by each team coaching staff during a game.

If a game is tied after completion of regulation play, one more inning will be played and the game will then be declared over and complete.

Unless there is a tie, no new inning may start after 90 minutes, based on the umpire's timekeeping device. A new inning starts immediately after the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is made, not when the defense is ready. Coaches of both teams should agree on the starting time along with the umpire and record that time in their scorebooks just before the first pitch of the game.

The Championship Game will last 7 innings, however no new inning will start after 1:45 (105 minutes.) Playoff and championship games that are tied at the end of regulation play will be played according to the International Tie Breaker Rule as follows: Starting with 1<sup>st</sup> extra inning of play, and each half inning thereafter, the offense begins with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that inning on 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

## **RULE 8—BATTER-RUNNER & RUNNER**

**Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike** A batter may attempt to advance to first base when the catcher fails to catch the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike. If first base is occupied and there are less than two outs, the batter will be called out regardless of if the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike was caught by the catcher or not. A batter who makes it to 1st base on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is not allowed to advance beyond 1st base until the next pitch is thrown, even if there is an overthrow/error on the attempt to get the batter out at 1st base.

**Infield Fly Rule** There is no infield fly rule in 10u.

**Thrown Bat** Umpires shall exercise their judgment when batters throw the bat after hitting the ball. A warning is appropriate for a first offense and an out may be assessed in instances where the second offense is judged to be flagrant or dangerous.

**Dead ball** Whether or not a runner may advance on a dead ball shall be solely in the discretion of the umpire.

**Runners' advance** If the ball is put in play by the batter and an overthrow occurs in an attempt to get a runner out at a base or trying to get the ball back to the pitcher, the runners may continue to advance multiple bases until either the ball is declared "dead" or "out of play" by the umpire OR the ball is returned to and under control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.

When the ball is returned to the pitcher during play on a batted fair ball, as long as

the ball remains in the control of the pitcher in the circle, a runner's advance is stopped. A runner between bases is entitled to advance to the next base only, but is at risk for being put out. If a runner advances further return the runner(s) to the base(s) they were entitled to. The ball must be in the glove or hand to be considered "in control".

If a pitcher makes a throw from the circle in front of a runner trying to advance to a new base, before the ball has been called dead by the umpire, and throws the ball past the intended target, the runner is awarded the base they were running to but cannot advance any further. Any other runners can only advance one base. This advantage to the pitcher is the same as that given a catcher who is trying to throw a base runner out stealing.

### **Stealing**

At the 10u level, unlimited stealing is allowed, including stealing home. Runners may leave the base as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. (as per USA Softball).

Stealing is one base per runner per pitch. A base runner cannot advance more than one base on a steal attempt. A base runner can be tagged out for overrunning or sliding past a base. A base runner may not advance on a pickoff attempt by the catcher. The purpose of this rule is to encourage the defense to attempt to make the out without risk of additional bases being stolen by the runner due to errors.

The runner must wait for the next pitch to be able to steal an additional base.

### **Sliding – contact**

The runner must either slide, try to avoid a tag, or avoid a collision with a defensive player at any base. Crashing into a defensive player or failing to slide or otherwise avoid contact is an out. The umpire's judgment prevails.

## **RULE 10—UMPIRES**

### **Appeal Plays**

The only appeal plays the Umpire will rule on are missing a base, leaving a base too early when tagging up and batting out of order. All other calls are final.

### **No-shows**

If no umpire has arrived for the beginning of a 12u game and there is a 10u/10u game scheduled for the same time at an adjacent field with an umpire present, the umpire scheduled for the 10u game should umpire for the 12u.

If no umpire is available, coaches must find someone to umpire any game for which no substitute is available. Games will not be rescheduled because of an umpire no-show. Coaches must play the game and agree upon some mutually acceptable umpiring situation.

## **8u DIVISION – LOCAL RULES**

*Pitching Distance*     *30 FEET from the front of the pitcher's plate (rubber) to the back tip of home plate. (per USA Softball)*

1. **PITCHER:** Players interested in pitching are encouraged to pitch as early as the first game of the season. The pitcher will be allowed to pitch to the count, balls and strikes will be called by coaches. A player may pitch up to two innings (or the equivalent of six outs).

If coach pitch is needed, coaches shall pitch to their own team from the rubber at 30 feet. If necessary, coaches may pitch from a closer distance if they are struggling to throw a strike. Coaches are encouraged to throw a more level pitch, rather than a high slow pitch-type lob. An offensive or defensive coach should be positioned behind home plate to facilitate throws back to the pitcher's circle. The coach pitcher should also be positioned at the pitcher's circle during player pitch to receive or help with throws back and be immediately present when coach pitch is needed. If a batted ball hits the coach/pitcher, play on. The adult pitcher is a part of the field just like any other defensive player. At no time shall the coach/pitcher intentionally obstruct play, but this will not be ruled as a dead ball or as an out.

A tee is no longer used in 8u games. **After 3 strikes, a batter will be called out.** After a 4th ball is thrown to a batter by a player pitcher, the adult pitcher (AP) comes in to pitch.

AP carries the count for a maximum of 3 pitches and every pitch will be considered a strike (unless the last strike is a foul or the pitch hits the batter). A batter will not be called out on a foul ball unless it is a bunt attempt or the foul ball is caught. **After 3 strikes, the batter is called out.**

If using straight coach pitch, the batter gets 3 pitches total (unless the last strike is a foul or the pitch hits the batter). First base will be awarded to the batter if they are hit by a player pitch (if AP hits the batter, that pitch will not count and the batter will be given another pitch). A batter hit by a player pitch will NOT have the option to keep hitting and must take their base. The batter is not allowed to advance beyond first base until the next pitch is thrown.

**FIELD SUPERVISORS:** The coach pitcher shall make ball and strike calls and calls on plays (safe or out, when runners advance-stopping throws are made, etc.), but should ask for help if unsure of a call. Explaining why certain calls are made can be instructive to the players at this age.

2. **CATCHER:** Coaches or siblings (at least 16 years old with at least a catcher's mask or full gear) shall catch and should be prepared to help with instruction to the batter. Under no circumstances should the adult catcher become involved in a play of a live ball. Opposing coaches may mutually agree to permit 8u catchers to dress in catcher's gear (with helmet) and play the position. In this case, the offensive team shall still provide an adult catcher, positioned behind catcher, to assist with returning the ball to the pitcher in order to keep the game moving at an appropriate pace.

- 3. THE FIELD:** The standard softball baseline distance is 60 feet between bases. Coaches may agree to play 8u games on 50-foot base paths. In such cases, the bases must be secured to the ground. Bases must be either regulation bases with posts or *nail-down* bases.

Note: Check with your district for the type of bases you will be using for home games. Make sure you have the proper equipment and understand how to install it.

- 4. BATTING:** No throwing the bat. All players on a team shall be in the batting lineup. Three outs or 5 runs constitute the end of an offensive team's half of any inning. There is no requirement that every player in the lineup hit during each half inning.

- 5. BALLS & STRIKES:** At 8u, balls and strikes will be called. See #1 above for details.

Note: Adult pitchers are encouraged to have each batter take one practice swing in the batters box to start her at-bat. The intent is for the adult pitcher to take note of the batters swing path and then attempt to give the batter a pitch that can easily be hit.

- 6. SCORING:** Scores of games will be kept, but there are no 8u/6u division standings. Coaches are discouraged from announcing the score during the game. Rather, the score must be known in order to determine when an inning ends if 5 runs score before 3 outs are made.

- 7. EQUIPMENT:** 8u will use a 10" compression ball (also known as a 6u ball) and as light a bat as possible (i.e., bats should weigh less than 27 oz.).

- 8. NUMBER OF DEFENSIVE PLAYERS:** All players on the team shall play defense every inning. Only one player shall be positioned at each infield position, including "pitcher". All other players, i.e., outfielders, will play in the outfield, at least 10 feet behind the baselines.

To be clear, there should be no more than 6 players in the infield ever. Any extra players must play at the edge of the outfield. To that end we recommend no more than 12-13 players per team.

The "pitcher" shall stand no closer to home plate than where the adult pitcher starts his/her delivery and shall be positioned immediately next to the adult pitcher.

- 9. DEFENSIVE PLAY REQUIREMENT:** Coaches should rotate players through as many different positions as possible.

- 10. COACHING ON FIELD:** Three instructional coaches are allowed on the field, including the coach who is pitching. The "catcher" may be a coach from the offensive team (team at bat). Coaches on the field are encouraged to position the shortstop and second base player for relays from the outfield. Coaches have the option of encouraging outfielders and/or relay infielders to make throws to appropriate bases.

- 11. RUNNERS:** All runners are stopped from advancing beyond the base toward which they are running by any throw by:

1. An infielder (including catcher and pitcher) or
2. An outfielder if the throw reaches the infield dirt.

**Note:** There is no “halfway” rule. Runners may advance to the base toward which they were running at the moment the advance stopping throw occurred.

**Note:** A base runner is permitted to leave the base as the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Runners electing to take this type of "lead" are subject to being picked off.

Each team will be allowed 3 steal attempts per inning. Stealing 2nd base and stealing 3rd base are allowed. Stealing home is not allowed. Runners may leave the base as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand (as per USA Softball).

A steal “attempt” is defined as a steal play that ends with an outcome of safe or out. If a player attempts to steal a base and the ball is hit foul this does not count as an attempt because the play is dead and the player must return to their base. If a player steals a base and is safe that counts as one of the three attempts for that inning. If a player attempts to steal a base and is called out that counts as one of the three attempts for that inning. If a team executes a double steal that will count as two steals. A double steal would be defined as players on first and second base who both steal at the same time. As players are not allowed to steal home at 8u, the only double steal possible is the scenario as described above. If a player advances a base on a passed ball or wild pitch this DOES count as a steal. This will be one of the 3 steals for the inning. If a team has already used their 3 steal attempts for an inning and one of their players attempts to steal a base there are two outcomes.

1. If the player successfully steals the base the play stops when the ball is under control of the pitcher the player must then be returned to the base that they came from.
2. If the player is called out while attempting to steal, the player is still out. The player is attempting a steal illegally at that point and is running at their own peril.

A base runner cannot advance if the ball is thrown past the player covering the base, except on a batted ball. You can be tagged out for overrunning or sliding past a base. A base runner may not advance on a pickoff attempt by the catcher. No stealing is allowed during the change of pitcher or during coach pitch.

## **12. RUNNER'S ADVANCE:**

If the ball is put in play by the batter and an overthrow occurs in an attempt to get a runner out at a base or trying to get the ball back to the pitcher, the runners may continue to advance multiple bases until either the ball is declared “dead” or “out of play” by the umpire OR the ball is returned to and under control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.

When the ball is returned to the pitcher during play on a batted fair ball, as long as the ball remains in the control of the pitcher in the circle, a runner's advance is stopped. A runner between bases is entitled to advance to the next base only, but

is at risk for being put out. If a runner advances further return the runner(s) to the base(s) they were entitled to. The ball must be in the glove or hand to be considered “in control”.

If a pitcher makes a throw from the circle in front of a runner trying to advance to a new base, before the ball has been called dead by the umpire, and throws the ball past the intended target, the runner is awarded the base they were running to but cannot advance any further. Any other runners can only advance one base. This advantage to the pitcher is the same as that given a catcher who is trying to throw a base runner out stealing.

**13. TIME LIMIT:** Games will last up to 6 innings or not longer than 75 minutes.

**FIELD SUPERVISORS:** If no umpire is available, the coach in charge of pitching shall make calls on plays (safe or out, foul balls, when runner advance-stopping throws are made, etc.), but should ask for help when s/he is unsure of a call. Explaining why certain calls have been made can be instructive to the players at this age.

### **6u DIVISION – LOCAL RULES**

1. **PITCHER:** Coaches shall pitch to their own team from approximately 30 feet from home plate. If necessary, coaches may pitch from a closer distance, if necessary to throw a strike. Coaches are encouraged to throw a more level pitch, resembling a fast pitched softball, rather than a high slow pitch-type lob. Under no circumstances should the adult pitcher become involved in the play of a live ball.

Batting tee will be used for all at-bats for games before Spring Break. Coaches may make an exception if both team’s coaches are agreed on coach pitching. Otherwise both teams use the tee until after Spring Break.

Coach is encouraged/allowed to pitch for games after Spring Break, but it is not required. Teams may coach pitch or continue to use the tee at this point. After 4 missed pitches then tee is used.

2. **CATCHER:** Coaches or siblings (at least 16 years old with at least a catcher’s mask or full gear) shall catch and should be prepared to help with instruction to the batter. Under no circumstances should the adult catcher become involved in a play of a live ball. Opposing coaches may mutually agree to permit 6U catchers to dress in catcher’s gear (with helmet) and play the position. In this case, the offensive team shall still provide an adult catcher, positioned behind catcher, to assist with returning the ball to the pitcher in order to keep the game moving at an appropriate pace.
3. **THE FIELD:** The standard softball baseline distance is 60 feet between bases. Coaches may agree to play 6u games on 50-foot base paths. In such cases, the bases must be secured to the ground. Bases must be either regulation bases with posts or *nail-down* bases.

Note: Check with your district for the type of bases you will be using for home games. Make sure you have the proper equipment and understand how to

install it.

4. **BATTING:** No throwing the bat. All players on a team shall be in the batting lineup. Every player shall bat in every inning.
5. **BALLS & STRIKES:** There will be no calling of balls and strikes and no outs. Each player shall bat until she hits a fair ball. If batter has not hit a fair ball after 4 pitches, a batting tee shall be used.

Intent: The intent here is to keep the game moving, keep the defense involved in the game, and avoid overly frustrating the batter.

Note: Adult pitchers are encouraged to have each batter take one practice swing in the batters box to start her at-bat. The intent is for the adult pitcher to take note of the batters swing path and then attempt to give the batter a pitch she can easily hit.

6. **SCORING:** No score is kept.
7. **EQUIPMENT:** 10” safety ball (“incrediball”) as light a bat as possible. (i.e., bats should weigh less than 27 oz.).
8. **NUMBER OF DEFENSIVE PLAYERS:** All players on the team shall play defense every inning. Only one player shall be positioned at each infield position, including “pitcher”. All other players, i.e., outfielders, will play in the outfield, at least 10 feet behind the baselines.

To be clear, there should be no more than 6 players in the infield ever. Any extra players must play at the edge of the outfield. To that end we recommend no more than 12-13 players per team.

The “pitcher” shall stand no closer to home plate than where the adult pitcher starts his/her delivery and shall be positioned immediately next to the adult pitcher.

Pitcher’s defensive position shall be played at a minimum of 30 feet from home plate.

9. **DEFENSIVE PLAY REQUIREMENT:** Coaches should rotate players through as many different positions as possible.
10. **COACHING ON FIELD:** Up to 5 instructional coaches are allowed on the field, including the coach who is pitching. The “catcher” may be a coach from the offensive team (team at bat). Coaches on the field are encouraged to position the shortstop and second base player for relays from the outfield. Coaches have the option of encouraging outfielders and/or relay infielders to make throws to appropriate bases.
11. **RUNNERS:** There is no stealing allowed of any base. Any throw by a defensive player stops the runner from advancing beyond the base toward which she was heading when the throw occurred.

*Note:* There is no “halfway” rule. Runners may advance to the base toward which they were running at the moment the advance stopping throw occurred.

*Note:* A base runner is permitted to leave the base as the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Runners electing to take this type of "lead" are subject to being picked off.

**12. TIME LIMIT:** Games shall last no longer than 60 minutes.

**13. FIELD SUPERVISORS:** The coach in charge of pitching shall make calls on plays (safe or out, foul balls, when runner advance-stopping throws are made, etc.), but should ask for help when s/he is unsure of a call. Explaining why certain calls have been made can be instructive to the players at this age.