

# 2026 CIRL

## Softball Coach Packet



### IMPORTANT LEAGUE DATES

- April 20: League Games Begin
- June 9: Last day of regular season play. All games must be played.
- Week of June 15: Year End Tournament

## **Central Iowa Recreation League Code of Conduct**

**It is expected that anyone associated with the CIRL will act appropriately at all times. Anyone found in violation of this code will face reprimand which may include expulsion from the league. Violations may include but are not limited to the following:**

- Touch, push, shove, strike, or otherwise threaten (physically or verbally) any other individual.
- Exhibit unsportsmanlike conduct including the throwing of gloves, helmets, hats, bats, balls, or any other object.
- Use or cause the use of unnecessary rough tactics in the play of a game against opposing players.
- Use profane, obscene or vulgar language.
- Be intoxicated.
- Use tobacco.
- Speak disrespectfully to any other manager, coach, player, official, spectator or board member.
- Tamper or manipulate any league documents.
- Challenge an umpire's authority.

## CIRL Coaches Meeting Important Information

### Reminders:

- Managers and coaches set the environment for success of your team and the league.
- Set goals for your team: safety, fun, sportsmanship and learning the basics.
- Sportsmanship and safety are first priority and must be practiced by all members of your team.
- Have a meeting with parents outlining the team and league goals emphasizing their role in sportsmanship. Remind the parents they are there for encouragement, you are there to coach.
- Must have an adult in the dugout during the entire game.
- The league can only allow team members and coaches/parent volunteers in the dugout, no siblings.
- Home team is to provide umpire with 1 new game ball and one gently used back up ball prior to start of game.
- Make sure all bats are legal, must be USA Softball approved.

### Game Responsibilities:

- Know your communities field maintenance responsibilities.
- **Umpires:** Hosting team is responsible for providing a plate umpire and a base umpire. If a base umpire is not available, the plate umpire will call the game.
- **Game Schedule:** All games must be played. All games must be rescheduled within 48 hours by the coaches. Please make sure to check with your local contacts to ensure a field and umpire is available.
- **Reporting Scores:** Home team is responsible to report score immediately after the game to [cirlsoftballscores.com](http://cirlsoftballscores.com)

## SAFETY CODE:

- Responsibility for safety procedures is the responsibility of everyone involved with the CIRL.
- Each team must have a first aid kit that is readily available during practice and games. A fully stocked First Aid Kit must be available in each concession stand.
- No games or practices should be held when weather or field conditions are not good, particularly when lighting is inadequate.
- Play area should be inspected frequently for holes, damage, stones, glass and other foreign objects. Home team is responsible for pre-game inspection of the field.
- All team and equipment should be stored within the team dugout, or behind screens, and not within the area defined by the umpires as “in play”.
- Only players, coaches, parent volunteers and umpires are permitted on the playing field or in the dugout during games and practice sessions.
- During practice and games, all players should be alert and watching the batter on each pitch.
- During warm-up drills players should be spaced so that no one is endangered by wild throws or missed catches.
- All pre-game warmups should be performed within the confines of the playing field and not within areas that are frequented by and thus endangering spectators.
- Equipment must be inspected regularly for the condition of the equipment as well as proper fit. Worn equipment must be replaced and disposed of properly.
- Batters must wear approved protective helmets during batting practice and games.
- Catchers must wear helmet, mask, **dangling throat guard**, chest protector, and shin guards. Managers should encourage all players to wear mouth guards.
- Except when returning to a base, headfirst slides are not permitted.
- Player must not wear jewelry during games and practices.
- Managers and Coaches may warm up pitchers before or during a game.
- Throwing of bat after hitting a ball or throwing a bat towards the dugout is not allowed.
- Weather – If the “feels like” temperature is at or below 40 degrees, the league will post on the league website that no games will be played that day, no exceptions. Decision will be made by 3:00 p.m.
- In the event of a weather delay, teams shall seek shelter and be ready to resume play once the storm has passed. Lightning delays are 30 minutes from the last strike.

## Umpire/Rules Review

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### **Umpires and Managers must have a pregame meeting.**

- All rules posted on website are official. Below are some things to talk about in regards to items that may happen during a game.
- It is harder to find umpires than managers and coaches. Judgment calls are not protestable or debatable. Questions on application of rules are. My expectation is that when play is relaxed, the manager will ask for time, come out with his or her hands in their back pockets, and have a discussion of what rule they think was misapplied.
- No umpire can overrule another. Proper mechanics is for one umpire to ask the other, if he missed it, though he is not obligated to do so.
- Obstruction is action by the defense
- Interference is action by the offense
- Defense cannot obstruct offense advancing if they do not have the ball. Especially important at home, catchers need to know they are liable of getting mowed over-as long as the runner isn't coming in with forearm up - NO MUST SLIDE RULE.
- Obstruction 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> basemen on balls hit to outfield
- One coach must remain on the bench at all times- if you only have 2 coaches for a game, send out a player, with a helmet for base coaching.
- Calling time-managers and umpires, on a walk – wait for kid to get to first.
- Ejections of a player or a coach result in a one game suspension. It is to your advantage to keep your players under control-for thrown bats, helmets and such.
- Pool player allowed. If 9<sup>th</sup> player shows up, pool player cannot play. Pool player must bat last, and play in the outfield. Pool player can use their real team's uniform. Inform the other coach pregame that you have a pool player. Pool players are not allowed in the year end tournament. All time limits will be followed during tournament play.

**The CIRL reserves the right to modify or change any information in this packet at anytime throughout the course of the season.**

## CIRL SOFTBALL RULES - 2025

All rules in accordance with USA Softball Rules with the following exceptions/adaptations.

### Field and Equipment

- Ball: 3-4 Grade (11") 5-6 Grade (12")
- Pitching distance: 3-4 Grade (35') 5-6 Grade (40')
- Base distance: 60'
- Batting Helmets with face masks are required. Chin strongly encouraged.
- Catchers mask with dangling throat protector is required.
- Fielding mask for pitcher required, optional for other infield positions.
- No steel spikes.

### The Game

- A maximum of 5 innings will be played. No new inning will start after 1:15 minutes of play. Once an inning is started it will be completed, unless the home team is ahead. Game time is from first warm up pitch, not scheduled game time. Ties after the final inning will end in a tie ballgame. Home team will not in the final inning, if leading, in the first game of a double header.
- The final score shall be reported when the game is "officially over". For example, if the home team is ahead after final inning of visitor at bat or when the home team scores winning run in final at bat. No score reverting to a previous inning.
- In 3-4 Grade 10 defensive players are allowed, the 10th player must be positioned in the outfield grass.
- Teams must have 8 players to start and finish a game, no automatic out.
- Pitchers are allowed a maximum of 5 warm-up pitches within 1 minute between innings.
- All players will bat in one master batting order with free substitution.
- No player shall sit on the bench for more than one inning at a time, unless the player sitting out is sitting out for disciplinary action.
- Dropped 3rd strike played as an out. In 5-6 grade baserunners may still advance.
- 5 runs maximum/inning or 3 outs, whichever occurs first.
- If using a pool player, that player must play in one of the corner outfield positions and bat last in the batting order. Pool players are not allowed in the season ending tournament.
- Bunting is allowed in all divisions, with the exception of a coach pitch.
- Infield Fly will be called in all divisions.

<p><b>Pitching</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> Pitchers are limited to a maximum of three (3) innings/game. No pitcher may pitch more than 2 consecutive innings unless the official game is only 2 innings in length due to time limit, weather, or other circumstances limiting the official game to 2 total innings.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> Pitchers are limited to a maximum of four (4) innings/game. No pitcher may pitch more than 3 consecutive innings unless the official game is only 3 innings in length due to time limit, weather, or other circumstances limiting the official game to 3 total innings.</p>
<p><b>Batting and Advancement</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> There is no advancement by a batter/runner on any play other than a batted ball. Runners/batters may advance on a hit ball until the ball is in control of the pitcher within the pitcher’s circle. (No stealing) No pick-off attempts will be allowed.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> Regular USA Softball Rules</p> <p>Players hit by a pitch will be awarded 1st base, with the exception of a 3-4 player hit by a coach pitched ball. Players do not have to make an attempt to get out of the way of a pitch, however, any pitch that would be considered a strike will be called a strike in the count without advancement.</p>
<p><b>Pitcher/Catcher Lookback Rule</b></p>	<p>Once the pitcher is in control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the base-runner must stop advancement at the base they are advancing to. If the baserunner stops, they must go back to the base they last advanced to. If they immediately do not return to their base, the penalty is an automatic out. The only exception is, in 5-6 grade if a pitcher or catcher makes a throw to the base that the base-runner is returning to, the runner may advance. If a runner stops at a base, the pitcher does not have to physically look back a runner for play to end. There are no pick off attempts in the 3-4 Grade level.</p>
<p><b>3-4 Grade Coach Pitch Rule &amp; Defensive Coach</b></p>	<p><b>3-4 Grade Only!</b> After a normal pitch count and a player is “walked”, the coach will come out to pitch to the player up to bat. The coach must pitch within the pitching circle; strike count from the pitcher carries over to coach pitch. <b><u>Every coach pitch is considered a strike.</u></b> Any 3-strike combination and the batter is out. The only exception is on a 3rd strike foul ball, in that case, the batter keeps their at-bat. The player pitcher must have both feet in the pitcher’s circle to one side or the other of the coach pitching.</p>

	<p>To speed up the game and allow for more innings, a defensive coach will stand near the backstop to help retrieve balls that get past the catcher.</p>
<b>Weather Related Issues</b>	<p>If a game is shortened due to weather, lighting, or other circumstances, an official game can be called after:</p> <p><b>3-4 Grade:</b> 2 complete innings of play.</p> <p><b>5-6 Grade:</b> 3 complete innings of play.</p>
<b>Sportsmanship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chanting directed at an opposing player at any time is not allowed.</li><li>• The home plate umpire is in control of the game and playing area. The umpire has the right to eject any coach, player or fan that is acting in an inappropriate manner.</li></ul>

Revised April 2024