BPAA / CDAA / MGPR
GIRLS SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE
RULES AND POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR 2025

Remember to coach safety, fundamentals, and sportsmanship.

In all divisions, games will be played in accordance with the official 2025 USSSA Rules for Slow Pitch Softball, **except as stated in this document.** The USSSA all-ages Slow Pitch rule book may be found at RULE BOOK; their rules specific to youth programs are at www.usssa.com/docs/2018/2018_SP_YouthRules.pdf.

In 2025, the league includes 6U, 8U, 10U, and 12+/14U divisions. The 12+/14U division consists primarily of girls eligible (by age) for 12U, plus a limited number of girls eligible for 14U. This 12+/14U division will play by the 12U rules in this document.

- **See the 6U/8U Rules Supplement for additional rules for those divisions regarding coach pitching, coaches in the field, umpires, player rotation, etc.**
- These rules pertain to 6U through 14U spring/summer league games for Brooklyn Park Athletic Association (BPAA), Champlin-Dayton Athletic Association (CDAA), and Maple Grove Parks and Recreation (MGPR).

10U Pitching:

Until and during the mid-season tournament, there will be no walks in 10U. If any at-bat reaches a point where four balls have been called, a coach for the batting team will enter the field and pitch the remainder of the at-bat. Strikes (including called strikes, swinging strikes, foul balls, and courtesy fouls) will still be called by the umpire. The at-bat will continue until the batter either puts the ball in play, or strikes out.

After the mid-season tournament, 10U pitching will revert to normal rules. There will be no more coach-pitching, and a batter can walk when four balls have been pitched.

- **Pitching Arc:** Coach-pitched pitches should be delivered at moderate speed, underhand (from below the hip) with a perceptible arc at least as high as the batter's head, before the ball reaches home plate.

- **Coach- Pitchers:** All coach-pitchers must wear a glove. If the coach-pitcher is the first person to make contact (intentionally or unintentionally) with a batted ball, the ball is dead, and the play is ruled "no pitch". Baserunners must return to their original bases, and the pitch will not be counted as a strike.

- Coach-pitchers must make an effort to get out of the way of batted balls, moving players (both fielders and baserunners), and potential defensive throws. While it is understood that it is not always possible to get out of the way of all plays, intentionally remaining stationary as a standard approach to these situations is not allowed.

- Coaches must pitch from the pitching plate/mark at 40 feet.

- A pitching mat will be used at the 10U and 12+/14U for the first month of the season and will be re-evaluated after that point. If any pitch with a legal arc hits any part of the mat, the pitch will be called a strike.

Team Rosters:
No player shall participate before being fully registered with one of the participating organizations (BPAA, CDAA, and MGPR). Players wishing to play up to an older division should consult with their organization. In no circumstances are players allowed to play down to a younger division.

Division	Base Distance*	Pitching Distance	Infield Fly Rule	Ball Size
6U	55’	35’	No	11”
8U	60’	35’	No	11”
10U	65’	40’	No	11”
12+/14U	65’	46’	Yes	11”

*** Bases should be placed on dirt portion of field.** If the size of the infield dirt does not allow bases to be placed on the dirt at their regular distance, adjust base length such that all bases are on dirt.

Weather Conditions: No games or practices will be held when the National Weather Service has issued Severe Weather Warnings or when lightning is within 10 miles. If any game is interrupted by severe weather, the game will be suspended by the umpire (if one is present) or by agreement of the head coaches if there is no umpire. Unless conditions warrant otherwise, all parties should wait at the field for up to 15 minutes to determine if the game can be resumed. After 15 minutes, if a game cannot be resumed (as determined by umpire or head coaches), players and coaches may leave. Umpire may leave if there are no other games scheduled or field conditions become unplayable for further games.

Make-up Games: We will ATTEMPT to reschedule games not played due to rain outs, wet grounds, etc., if possible. **Games may only be re-scheduled by the League Scheduler. Work with your Division Commissioner to coordinate rescheduling.**

Score Books are provided and must be used by both teams.

The team bench/dugout is to be used only by players and coaches. If all coaches for a team will be in on-field coaching positions, the coaches should designate one or more parents to be present in the bench/dugout area to assist them. No one else (siblings, friends, pets, non-designated parents, media, etc.) is allowed in the team bench/dugout area.

The on-deck batter is to use only the on-deck circle located behind the current batter (third base side if the batter is right-handed, first base side if left-handed), regardless of which dugout her team occupies. Only one player is allowed to be taking warm-up swings at a time. The first batter of any half-inning should not begin taking warm-up swings until the opposing team is completely in the field, and the batter's own team is completely in the dugout.

Coaches: All coaches (including all base coaches) must be at least 16 years of age. The base coach's box is three feet back from the baseline**. A coach may not touch a baserunner at any time during play in an attempt to aid or direct the runner,** if this infraction occurs the base runner is out.

Umpires: Umpire decisions are final. Umpires are in charge of the game. At least five minutes before the scheduled start of the game, the umpire(s) shall call the coaches together for a conference to discuss ground rules and answer any questions.

8U and older games will normally be officiated by an umpire supplied by the League. However, if one is not available, each team will furnish one umpire and they will rotate position between home plate and the infield each half inning. The umpire from the defensive team will umpire behind home plate during each at bat. **Head coaches or base coaches may not umpire.** The home plate umpire is the head umpire that half inning. A game may be played with one umpire if agreed to by the coaches.

- See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for rules regarding 6U umpires.

Bats: All bats must be marked Official Softball.

- **10U and above only: The performance standard for all bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less.**

Thrown Bat: The head umpire will issue a warning to both team benches on the first occasion of a thrown bat. Any batter throwing their bat after the warning has been issued is out, the ball is dead, and the base runners may not advance. **This rule shall be enforced at all levels.**

Bunting: It is illegal to bunt or chop at the ball. The batter is out.

Balls and Strikes:

- **In 12+/14U**, three balls shall constitute a walk.
- **In 10U,** four balls constitute a walk.

- **In 10U and older,** two strikes shall constitute a strike out, except that each batter with one strike shall be allowed one courtesy foul ball. After that, the batter is out if an additional foul ball is hit or another strike is called.
- See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for their rules regarding batting limits.

Base Running: In all divisions, **when a play is made on a base runner at a base**, the base runner must either slide or clearly get out of the way to let the play continue. If the base runner fails to do so, they will be called out. Double first bases are used (place the white base in fair territory with the colored base in foul territory). The first baseman will use the base in the playing field, and the runner will use the base in the foul area when there is a play at 1st base.

Courtesy Runners: Courtesy runners are allowed for base runners who are unable to continue as a baserunner for medical or injury reasons. Umpires may disallow courtesy runners if they believe they are not for valid medical or injury reasons. The courtesy runner will be the player to most recently have been called out.

Positioning of Fielders: In the 6U through 10U divisions, the first, second, shortstop, and third base players cannot be more than five feet in front of the baseline when the ball is pitched. **In all divisions,** if runners are on base, the baseman and shortstop should not stand in the baseline unless said player is fielding or is in possession of the ball. All four outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass at the start of each play. (Exceptions to this rule may be agreed upon by the coaches and umpires before the game when playing on fields with non-standard infield skins.) On smaller fields, outfielders must be 25 feet from the baseline.

Starting Time: All games will start promptly as specified on the league schedule, or will be forfeited by the team not on the field ready to play. A team with an insufficient number of players to start a game will be allowed a ten-minute grace period **from the scheduled start time** to field a team.

Minimum Player Quantity—8U and older: A team may play with as few as six rostered players present. If a team has five or fewer rostered players present, the game will be declared a forfeit.

If a team has at least six, but fewer than ten, players present, the game will be played under the following rules. <u>The game will not be considered a forfeit, and the final score will count in league standings and/or tournament results</u>:

Nine players:
- Team will play with the players they have present.

Six to eight players:
- When at bat, the shorthanded team will bat <u>only the players from their **own roster**</u>.
- When on defense, the shorthanded team may borrow from either or both of the following sources, to increase their quantity of defensive players to nine:

- Players from the opposing team. If this is done, the borrowed players will be from the bottom of the opposing team's batting order that inning. This option is always available to the coach of a shorthanded team; the opposing coach cannot refuse to allow her/his players to be borrowed.
- Players from another BPAA/CDAA/MGPR team, <u>of the same age division or younger</u>. For liability reasons, borrowed players must be registered slowpitch softball players in one of those organizations—<u>NO EXCEPTIONS</u>.

- If the shorthanded team has:
  - eight players, the borrowed player will play right field.
  - seven players, the borrowed players will play right field and center field.
  - six players, the borrowed players will play the three outfield positions.
- If players are borrowed from the opposing team, and that team has enough players reach base that a borrowed player will soon be due at bat, time will be called to substitute another player into the defensive position.

See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for 6U minimum player quantity requirements.

Length of Games (Innings): A regulation game is seven innings. A total of four innings, or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead, shall constitute a game. (Note: This minimum number of innings applies one to games shortened due to extenuating circumstances, such as weather. A game which reaches the time limit will be official, even if the minimum number of innings have not been played.) **For games tied after seven innings, extra innings may only be played within the time constraints listed below. Tie games during the regular season shall be recorded as a tie.**

Length of Games (Time):
No new inning will start after 65 minutes have expired, regardless of the score.

- Any time after the time limit expires, the game will end immediately if completing the current inning could not impact the win/loss/tie result (due to per-inning run limits).
- League tournaments may have different time limits—See the rules of each tournament for details.
- For games played on a field with a scoreboard clock, the time remaining on the clock will be considered official unless extenuating circumstances exist (weather delays, injuries, etc.).
- If teams desire to scrimmage beyond the time limit, they may do so upon agreement of the coaches, provided that there are no other games scheduled to be played on that field at that time. However, that scrimmage time does not impact the result or final score of the game, and umpires will not be staying for that additional period. Especially for younger divisions, please keep in mind school schedules and typical age-appropriate bed times when deciding how long to scrimmage.

Umpires may declare an additional inning will be played if they determine that a team was intentionally stalling or playing slowly to impact the amount of playing time remaining.

Regular season games ended due to darkness are considered complete, regardless of game status, with the final score being the score at the end of the last completed full inning.

Established Limits of Ball in Play: Umpires and opposing coaches shall discuss boundary lines for the particular field before the game starts. The playing field is within two imaginary lines starting at the backstop's wings, then running parallel with the first and third base foul lines. If the backstop does not have wings, the line is three feet in front of the players' bench. The ball is live and in play within these boundaries. Only players, coaches, and umpires are allowed within the field of play.

Uniform/Equipment: In all divisions, uniform shirts must be worn during games. Teams may provide their own uniforms, as long as each team member has one, and that they are in good taste. Shirts must be appropriately worn throughout the game (shirts must not be rolled up exposing midriff). Failure to appropriately wear uniform could result in ejection from the game.

The catcher must wear a face mask and chest protector, and the pitcher (including 6U and 8U players in the "pitcher" defensive position) must wear a face mask, **during both games and practices when a batter is present.** The leagues will provide one each of these pieces of equipment to each team, or players may provide their own.

The use of a face mask is highly recommended at all age levels when in the field, but not required.

All players in all divisions must wear a batting helmet when batting, baserunning, or while in the on-deck circle. Neither chin straps nor face masks are required for offensive players.

Game Ball: For regular season games, the home team will provide the umpire a new or good condition game ball prior to the start of each game. A playable backup ball will be furnished by the visiting team.

Pitcher Warm-up: Limited to 5 pitches for a new pitcher, and 3 pitches between innings.

Pitching Arc: The ball must be delivered at moderate speed, underhand (from below the hip) **with a perceptible arc at least as high as the batter's head, but not to exceed 10 feet,** before the ball reaches home plate. A flat pitch, a pitch without sufficient arc, is a ball, even if it is within the strike zone. Should a batter swing at a flat pitch and miss or foul, it is a strike. If the batter swings and hits the ball, the ball is alive and in play. A pitch hitting home plate is a ball, unless swung at.

- See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for their rules regarding pitching arc.

The **pitcher's foot** must be in contact with the pitcher's plate or mark when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

- See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for their rules regarding the pitcher's plate.

Runs per Inning Rule: In 6U through 12+/14U there is a maximum **six** run limit per team, per inning. When a team's sixth runner crosses home plate, their turn at bat ends, **regardless of the number of outs.**

Game Run Rule—12+/14U—"20 after 4, 12 after 5": A game will immediately end if a team is ahead by 20 or more runs after four complete innings (three and a half innings, if the home team leads), or by 12 or more runs after five complete innings (four and a half innings, if the home team leads). This rule applies regardless of the amount of time remaining.

- There is no Game Run Rule in 6U through 10U.

Time Called: "Time" shall be called by the umpire when the fielding team has control of the ball within the baselines and runners have ceased to try to advance. The ball shall be considered dead, and base runners may not advance after "time" is called. The ball can be controlled by any player within the field of play.

- See the **6U/8U Rules Supplement** for their rules on time being called.

All Divisions will Bat Their Entire Team Roster: In all divisions, teams shall bat their entire team roster in a continuous batting order. The batting order may not be changed during the game. Late players shall be added at the end of the batting order. Injured or departing players may be skipped without penalty, and injured players may return to the game. Uninjured players may not be skipped/removed in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage.

Minimum Playing Time:

- **In 6U, 8U, 10U, and 12+/14U,** all players shall play an equal amount of innings in the field. **Example:** No player shall sit out their 2nd inning until all players on their team have sat one inning, and so on, to the end of the game. This is expected in league and in tournaments. Coaches need to rotate positions for all of their players. No player should play outfield every inning (or majority of the game), nor should a player play all game in the infield. It is the coaches job to ensure all players get opportunities at all positions.
- At 12+/14U - in tournaments fair play rules are in effect (i.e. no player shall sit out their 2nd inning until all players have sat one inning). Putting a competitive roster on the field to showcase our players can happen at the tournaments. Meaning, coaches can play their players position wise how they see fit. This is still keeping in mind the above fair play rule, while still rotating players as best as possible.

In all divisions, any player(s) who will not be allowed to participate (benched) for disciplinary reasons shall be called to the attention of the umpire and the opposing coach when the batting orders are exchanged, or at the time of discipline. A player receiving such discipline is considered to be "not present" during the discipline—they may be added to the end of the batting order when the discipline period is over (similar to a late-arriving player), and their position in the batting order may be skipped without penalty if discipline is

imposed in-game. **A coach may not bench a player for quality of play.** However, acts of unsportsmanlike conduct, profanity, or other detrimental conduct are grounds for disciplinary action. Keep in mind our "play for fun" philosophy.

Coaches, Players and Fan Conduct: The head coach is responsible for controlling themselves, their team, and their fans. Failure to do so may result in the game forfeiture.

Coaches, players or fans are not to direct any verbal abuse, profanity or other form of ridicule at an umpire, coach, or player. A coach or player doing so will be warned, and if it is repeated, the umpire may elect to declare the game a forfeit in favor of the non-offending team, or eject the offending coach/player from the game and/or park.

If an umpire is harassed unduly by the fans of one or both teams, he/she may call "time" and ask the coach(es) to speak to their fans about confining their vocal efforts to cheering for their own team. If harassment continues, the umpire may declare the game a forfeit in favor of the non-offending team or "no contest" if both teams are at fault, in which case each team will receive a loss on their record.

While the umpires have primary responsibility and authority to enforce rules pertaining to sportsmanlike conduct, members of the Softball Committee may assist, and at their discretion, may impose immediate discipline ranging from warnings to ejections to players, coaches, and/or fans. Additionally, the Softball Committee may provide additional discipline for repeat and/or egregious offenses when they deem necessary.

Recruitment of players to play on a specific team to improve that team is not allowed, and could result in disciplinary action by the Softball Committee. The Softball Committee will review any allegations of recruitment brought before the Committee.

NO SMOKING – NO ALCOHOL: There is no smoking (including vaping), tobacco (of any type), or alcohol allowed at any BPAA/CDAA/MGPR softball event. This includes playing fields, dugouts, spectator seating, parking lots, and all other related areas. This is both a rule of the athletic associations involved, and an ordinance of the cities whose parks we play in. If any problems arise, call the police using **911.**