

DRIFTLESS YOUTH SPORTS

12U GIRLS FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RULES

Updated: March 2026

Team & League Organization

1. If a community has multiple teams, they must be divided up as evenly as possible or by grade.
2. Players in the 12U age group are currently in 5th or 6th grade.
3. A scheduling day will be held prior to the season for the coaches to schedule their own games.
4. League games will be scheduled beginning in the second week of May and continue through the month of June.

Equipment & Uniforms

1. Metal cleats are prohibited.
2. All players must wear matching shirts with a number on the back.
3. Pants are required.
4. Face masks MUST be worn by all players in the infield positions
5. Catchers are required to wear a mask with ear protection, helmet, chest protection, and shin guards.
6. Batters & Base runners must wear a helmet with a face shield.
7. No jewelry shall be worn. Earrings, necklaces, bracelets (soft or rigid) are prohibited. Note: For those who have newly pierced ears, studs must be taped.
8. Pitchers are allowed to wear sunglasses but must be see thru.
9. No sleeve on pitching arm unless it is of a dark color.
10. No jewelry on throwing arm.

Conduct

1. Drinking alcohol, smoking, chewing tobacco, or swearing on the field or in the dugout areas by the players or coaches is prohibited.
2. The coaches are the only people who can talk to an umpire during the game. Any parent who comes out on the field during play to argue will be ejected from the facility. Any player, coach, or fan that abuses an umpire can be banned by the league officers.
3. Cheering for your own team only. Disruptive actions or cheering against the other team is not allowed.

Umpires

1. A plate and field umpire are required.
2. The umpires are recommended to be at least 14 years old.

End of Year League Tournament

1. The End of Year League Tournament will be held at or near the end of the season.
2. Seeding for the End of Year League Tournament will be based on winning percentage in league games.
3. A minimum of 7 league games is needed to participate in the tournament.
4. Home team coaches are required to report game scores to the Dairyland League.

General Game Rules

1. All play will follow WIAA rules if not otherwise stated.
2. The home team will supply at least one playable ball for each game and will use a regulation 12-inch ball.

Players

1. A team must have 7 players present to start a game or a forfeit will be awarded to the opposing team.
2. 10 girls maximum (4 outfielders) and 7 minimum on the field on defense.
3. All players present at the game must play. Coaches may bench a player for disciplinary reasons.

Batting

1. All players present at a game must bat. Players arriving late will be added to the end of the lineup. Players leaving early will be skipped over in the batting order without penalty.
2. On deck batters must warm up behind the batter.
3. Bunting is allowed.
4. If a batter is walked, they may not advance to 2nd on the walk.
5. Batter cannot show bunt, pull the bat back and then swing at the ball. Batter is out if they do this.
6. Slap hitting is allowed.
7. Hitter must make an effort to avoid pitch to be awarded a walk on hit by pitch.
8. All players must use official softball bats bearing either a current USA Softball (ASA) certification mark or a USSSA 1.20 BPF certification thumbprint stamp. Bats may not exceed 34 inches in length and 2¼ inches in barrel diameter. There is no drop (length-to-weight ratio) restriction. Wood bats are permitted if approved under the applicable certification standard. Bats must not appear on the USA Softball or USSSA banned bat list and must be free of dents, cracks, or alterations. Baseball bats are not permitted.

Pitching

1. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game. If the game goes into extra innings, a pitcher may be brought back to pitch 2 extra innings.
2. Pitchers will use WIAA pitching rules.
3. Pitching distance is 40 feet from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
4. Coach pitch - No more than 4 walks per inning. Each batter after 4 walks that receives 4 balls will result in the coach pitching.
 - a. The coach must have contact with the pitching rubber when pitching.
 - b. Strike count will remain when coach comes in to pitch
5. Hit by pitch must always take 1st base.
 - a. If a player is hit by a pitch and cannot continue, the last out will take 1st base.
 - b. A ball that hits the ground first and then hits the batter is still a hit by pitch.
 - c. If a coach (pitching) hits his own player, the player must continue the at-bat.

Base Running

1. The Runner Is Out – When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into the defensive player. EFFECT: The ball is dead. The runner is out. All runners must return to the last base touched. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. An errant throw drawing the defense into the path of the runner is not a crash. If a base runner interferes with a fielder that is trying to make a play on a batted ball they are out.
2. If a fielder interferes with the runner and the fielder does not have the ball or is not making a play on the ball, the runner will be awarded an additional base.
3. Courtesy runners for the catcher are allowed and encouraged to avoid delays when there are two outs.
4. Stealing bases is allowed. (see examples below)
 - a. A player is allowed to steal or advance ONE base per pitch
 - b. Base runner may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate.

- c. If the umpire determines that the base runner leaves early, the runner will return to their previous base and receive a warning the first time. Runner will be out the second time.
 - i. If pitch was a ball or hit the batter, pitch won't count.
 - ii. If pitch was a strike, a strike will be called.
- d. Home plate is NOT live. A runner can only "steal" home if a play is being made on that runner once they've reached 3rd. (Note: If a runner is stealing from 2nd to 3rd and the catcher overthrows 3rd, the runner may NOT advance to home unless they've reached the base before the overthrow has occurred).

Time Length

1. All games will play 6 innings or 1 ¾ hour time limit whichever comes first. No new innings will be started after 1 1/2 hours. If field has time limit due to schedule then 1 1/2 will be time of last batter. This must be discussed by both coaches prior to a game starting.
2. If a game is suspended, it can be completed at a later date. The game will continue from the point of suspension with the same lineups. New players can be added to the bottom of the order. Players missing from the suspended game will be dropped and their position in the batting order will be skipped. Pitchers and fielders will still abide by the eligibility rules for that game. This rule does not apply to games that reach time limits. Regardless of the inning, the game is over if a time limit is reached.
 - a. Games played a minimum of 4 full innings or 3 ½ innings with the home team ahead are considered complete.

Forfeited Game

1. Forfeit games are scored 5-0.
2. When a game is cancelled due to weather, the coaches are responsible for rescheduling the game.

Additional Rules

1. 6 runs maximum per inning except the last inning which is unlimited. Last inning means 6th inning or if the time limit has arrived and both managers agree that it's the last inning before the inning starts. If it is not announced prior to the inning starting the 6 run limit will apply.
2. Dropped Third Strike is not enforced
3. If 12U Team A needs a player to fill a roster spot for a game due to any circumstance, they may select a player from a 10U or 12U division team. Players pulled from other team will bat at the bottom of the lineup. *discuss at board meeting - communicate to coaches to not abuse*
4. Infield Fly rule is enforced.
5. Look Back rule is not enforced.

Rule Review

1. Rules will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Driftless Youth Sports League Committee. All recommendations for changes and/or clarification should be communicated to the Driftless Youth Sports League Committee at the end of the year.