



NORTH LIBERTY YOUTH BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

Junior League (JL) SOFTBALL Rules of the Game

1	General	All games will be played according to the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules, except as amended herein. In case of conflict with the ASA rules, these amendments will be followed.
2	Uniform Requirements	Players may wear sliding pads or sliding shorts and mouth guards are encouraged. Players cannot wear steel spikes or loose jewelry such as earrings, chains or bracelets. The only jewelry allowed is a watch or medic alert bracelet/necklace. Earring posts are allowed. Dangling earrings are not allowed.
3	Playing Field	The field will have 60' bases. The batter's box is a 3' x 6' rectangle with its inner edge 4" from home plate. The batter's box shall extend 3' forward and 3' backward from the center of home plate. A double "safety base" will be used at 1st base. The orange part of the base placed to extend into foul territory is for the batter running from home to 1 st base only. All other rules for 1st base apply only to the "normal" white part of the base. The fielder can only use the white base. The pitching rubber will be 35' from the back of home plate.
4	<u>Coaching Staff</u>	<u>No more than two (2) base coaches and one (1) coach-pitcher are allowed on the playing field during the game when their team is at bat. Coaches must remain in the dugout when their team is in the field. All coaches must be in uniform when on the playing field. If a uniform is not available, a shirt that is close to the team's uniform color should be worn. If this is not possible, prior to the game the team must notify the umpire and the other team that this person is acting as a coach.</u> No use of tobacco in the dugouts or on the playing field is allowed.
5	Players' location	All fields: the third base side dugouts are considered the HOME team and the 1 st base side dugouts are considered the VISITORS team. All players must stay within the playing field or in the dugout area at all times during league games except with the permission of the manager or coach. During inning play, only the batter and player are allowed outside dugout. Player must have on a helmet on.
6	Umpire Equipment	Umpires must wear protective gear including, but not limited to, shin pads, a chest protector and a face mask.
7	Player Equipment	Catchers must wear full protective gear (i.e., helmet /mask with throat protector, chest protector, and shin guards) during practice and games while a batter is in the batter's box or while warming up the pitcher at any time. (I.e. at the beginning of an inning, on the sidelines between innings, or during a practice). This does not apply to coaches warming up pitchers. Any player on the offensive team who is outside of the dugout on the playing field must wear a batting helmet with ear protectors. No team or player may alter a player's uniform shirt.
8	Regulation Bats	Bats must be IGHSAU or USSSA approved for Softball.
9	Players in the game	All players present are in the batting order. 10 defensive players are allowed on the field. (a traditional infield and 4 outfielders). Outfielders must be in the outfield grass until pitcher has released the ball. In a situation where the grass is farther than a normal field, an exception may be made. If an exception is to be made it must be discussed and agreed upon by both coaches and umpire prior to the start of the game. No player shall sit out more than 2 innings per game, except in case of injury. (All players should play at least 1/2 of the game). A team must have at least 6 players to play a game.



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10	<u>Game Length</u>	<u>A complete game will be 6 innings or 100 minutes (whichever comes first). The home team shall record the game starting time with the umpire. No new inning is to begin with fewer than ten minutes left in the game (a new inning is considered to have begun immediately after the third out is made in the preceding inning). Any inning that starts after 80 minutes will automatically be the last inning.</u>
11	Double Headers	Early games: 5:30-7:00 (90 minutes). Late games: 7:15-8:45 (90 minutes). Teams in early games must vacate the dugout immediately following the game (post game talks outside fences). When an early and a late game are scheduled, no new inning beginning 70 minutes after the game start time. The early game will NOT go into extra innings, nor have its time limit exceeded even if the game results in a TIE. The home team shall record the game starting time with the umpire.
12	Darkness	If darkness threatens, the umpire will announce prior to the start of an inning that this will be the last inning. Regardless of how little or long it takes to play the final inning, the game is officially ended.
13	<u>Weather</u>	<u>Three complete innings (or two and one-half innings if the home team is leading) will constitute a legal game if the game is called by the umpire due to darkness, time limit or bad weather. When lightning is seen the game will be delayed 20 minutes. If any additional lightning is seen in the first 10 minutes of the delay, the game will be called.</u>
14	<u>Mercy Rule</u>	<u>No mercy rule.</u>
15	Run Limits	There is a limit of five (5) runs per inning for each team and the inning will be declared over by the plate umpire when the fifth (5 th) run crosses home plate.
15A	<u>Last Inning</u>	<u>The run limit will stay in place for the last inning of junior league games.</u>
16	Tie Games:	If, at the end of the sixth inning or at the end of the last inning after time has expired, and the game is tied, the International Tie Breaker will be utilized. Only one additional inning will be played. Each team will start the extra inning(s) with one out and a runner at second base. The runner will be the last official batter from the previous inning. The game will be over and declared a tie if the game is still tied at the end of the International Tie Breaker inning.
16A	Tie Games During Playoffs	If a playoff game is still tied after the international tie breaker inning the game winner will be determined by the team that had the lead at the end of the 2 nd inning. If still tied the game winner will be determined by the team that had lead at the end of the 3 rd inning. Continue pattern until a winner is found. Should the game still be tied through all innings, the winner will be determined by a coin flip by the umpire with home team calling heads or tails.
17	Balks	The pitcher cannot balk. In the event of a balk, a no-pitch will be called and the ball becomes dead.



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18	Pitchers/Catchers	<p>Pitchers may not pitch more than 1 inning in a game. A pitcher who has pitched at least one pitch to a batter is considered to have pitched for one inning.</p> <p>The pitching motion in ASA softball starts with in both feet in contact with the pitching rubber or in line with the rubber off to the side. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step with the non-pivot foot simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. It is not a step if the pitcher slides the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate toward the batter, or if the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act. Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground is allowed. If a hole has been created, the pivot foot may drag no higher than the level plane of the ground.</p> <p>Catchers shall remain in position until the pitcher releases the ball.</p>
18A	No Walk/Coach Pitching	<p>No player shall walk on four (4) pitched balls. Once the pitcher has pitched four (4) called balls, the batter's coach is then granted up to three (3) pitches. The batter will be out if they do not put the ball in play after three (3) coach pitches. The coach must pitch with at least one foot on the rubber.</p> <p>Stolen bases are not allowed when the coach is pitching. All coaches must pitch from the pitching rubber. Coaches may take one (1) step forward, but no more than 1 step.</p>
18B	Hit by Pitch	<p>If the batter is hit by a pitch, it will be considered the same as reaching four (4) balls and the coach pitching rules will apply. Note it is not considered a hit by pitch if the ball strikes the ground first, the batter swings at the pitch or the batter makes no effort to avoid being hit by the pitch.</p>
19	Batting Lineups	<p>Bat-around (all players in attendance are in the batting order whether or not they are playing one of the ten defensive positions) will be used in all Divisions. If a player arrives anytime within the first 30 minutes of the start of the game, their name shall be added to the bottom of the batting order. The Coach must notify the official Scorekeeper and Umpire upon the players' arrival. If the player arrives after the first 30 minutes of the game, they are not eligible to play in that game.</p>
20	Batting Out of Turn	<p>If a player that has batted at least once cannot take their turn batting for any reason, they will be declared out for their next at bat. Subsequent batting turns will result in no additional penalties (i.e., they are only out the first time only). It is the responsibility of the coach to notify the umpire and the other team's coach(es) prior to the player's turn at bat. Otherwise, an extra out will be given if discovered after another player has batted.</p>
21	Bat Throwing	<p>No bat throwing is allowed. First offense is a warning to the player. The team and coach are notified. Second offense may be an automatic out.</p>
22	Sliding	<p>Base runners must avoid contact when running bases and infielders must avoid contact with the base runner. Any flagrant attempt by a base runner to collide with a fielder (including the catcher) will result in the runner being called out and, at the umpire's discretion, may result in that player's ejection from the game. There is no automatic out for not sliding. A player shall never slide head first or slide into first base. First offense will result in a warning and the second offense will result in an out. Diving back to a base is not considered sliding.</p>
23	<u>Dropped Third Strike</u>	<p><u>The dropped third strike rule will not be used. All batters will be automatically out regardless of whether the pitch is caught or not.</u></p>
24	<u>Infield fly</u>	<p><u>The infield fly rule is not valid for this league.</u></p>



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25	On base rule	<p>Base runners must start with one foot touching the base, may not run until the pitched ball has crossed home plate or hits the ground and may advance any one base on any passed ball. <u>A player may advance only one base on the first overthrow during a play (i.e. runners must stay at base on any subsequent overthrows if they have already advanced one base due to a previous overthrow on that particular play). An overthrow to the pitcher is not considered an overthrown ball. A player may not advance a base once the ball has reached the pitching circle (10' radius around pitching rubber).</u></p> <p><i>Example: With a runner on 1st base, the batter hits a ground ball to second base. The second baseman throws toward second base to attempt a force, but the throw goes into left field. The runner that started at 1st base touches 2nd base and advances toward 3rd base. Meanwhile, the batter-runner touches 1st base and advances toward 2nd base. The left fielder throws the ball to 2nd base in an attempt to put out the batter-runner, but the throw goes into right field. The runners must stay at 2nd base and 3rd base, as they have already advanced one base due to an overthrow on this play.</i></p>
26	<u>Stealing</u>	<p><u>Base runners may not steal more than one base per batter.</u></p> <p><i>Example: The runner on first base may steal second base on a pass ball at home. The runner now may not steal another base until another batter has come up to the plate. When the next batter comes up to bat the runner on second base may steal third base.</i></p> <p><u>Players can not advance an extra base on an overthrown ball on a steal.</u></p> <p><u>Home is closed. Players will not be allowed to steal home.</u></p>
27	Rounding first base	<p>All runners should turn towards foul territory (runner's right). Base runners turning left towards 2nd base will not be considered an attempt unless they make a significant move towards 2nd base. Umpires have been instructed to give the base runner the benefit of the doubt, as players at this level sometimes turn to the left even when there is no intent to advance towards 2nd base. Base runners making a significant move towards 2nd base will be called out if they are tagged, unless on a base.</p>
28	Player Expulsion	<p>Any player who is expelled from a game will need to pick up an expulsion letter from the concession stand. They must have it signed by one of their parents/guardians and returned to the concession stand before that player will be allowed to participate in future games.</p>
29	Coaches or spectator expulsion	<p>If the coach, assistant coach or spectator is ejected from, or disciplined as a result of an action during a game, he/she will be suspended for their next played game. The coach or assistant cannot be on the field or in the dugout during their suspended game from the time of the umpires meeting with the coach (prior to the game) until the completion of the game. Any violation of this rule will result in forfeiture of this game, as well as being suspended from the next played game and potential further disciplinary action from the NLYBS Board of Directors.</p> <p>The ejected coach or spectator must appeal to the NLYBS Board of Directors in writing requesting to be reinstated and allowed back into the league. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.</p>
30	Coach Interference	<p>Base coaches may not touch players when the ball is in play. Coach interference results in the runner being called out. Coaches may not be on the field of play when the ball is in play.</p>
30A	Coach Conference	<p>The second trip by the coach to the pitcher's mound within the same inning will result in an automatic change in pitchers.</p>
31	Defensive Interference	<p>Defensive players without the ball must yield right of way to base runners. This includes the orange base at first base. If interference occurs then the runner may be awarded an extra base. This is not an automatic base.</p>
32	Game Results	<p>The umpire(s) will record the results of the game, including a pitching summary indicating who pitched in what innings, and turn it in to the concession stand. Standings will be posted on the NLYBS website.</p>



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33	Sportsmanship	NLYBS fosters a culture of learning and sportsmanship. Nobody is perfect. Players, coaches and umpires will make mistakes. We do not want to foster a culture of arguments and confrontation. Therefore, coaches, players and spectators are not allowed to argue or challenge calls made by the umpires. Arguing or challenging calls may result in ejection and being escorted from the field. Coaches may discuss umpiring issues with the Head Umpire after the game and the Head Umpire may then instruct umpires, if needed, in a positive coaching environment.
34	Delay of Game	No more than 2 minutes, or 3 practice pitches, will be taken for warm up between innings. After 2 minutes the umpire will wait 20 seconds and begin calling balls if the pitching team is not ready or calling strikes if the batter is not ready (Exceptions may be made for the catcher to get gear on/off).
35	Courtesy Runner	When there are 2 outs, the last person out may be used as a courtesy runner for the catcher. This is so that the catcher can be ready to play within the 2 minute warm-up time. A courtesy runner may be substituted for an injured player after the injured player has reached base safely.
36	Cancelled and Rescheduled Games	When a game is cancelled for any reason the makeup game must be rescheduled and completed prior to the evening of the last Wednesday prior to the start of the tournament.
37	Score Keeping	The home team is responsible for keeping the official score book. Both teams are responsible for making sure that the other team has a current and official team batting roster. Once the game starts any changes must be made to the official book.
38	Taunting or chanting	A player, coach or team may never taunt another player or team. To do so would be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and the player or team doing the taunting will be warned and possibly ejected from the game if repeated. If a player is being taunted then the player may be given an extra base. Chants are allowed from a team as long as they are not derogatory or directed towards an individual player. Chants are not allowed once a pitcher has started her wind-up.
39	Spectators	All spectators are expected to follow the same rules as the coach. Spectators shall never critique or taunt the umpires and or any players or coaches. They shall also not engage in any way except for positive cheering for the players. Any spectator may be ejected by the umpire or commissioner if warranted. Then they need to follow rule #29 for "Coaches or spectator expulsion" for reinstatement back into the league.

**Any questions or concerns should be directed to
Junior Softball League Commissioner or any NLYBS Board Member**