



## **2026 Spring Youth Softball League**

### **Spring 8U/10U/12U Girls' Softball League Rules**

Purpose: The purpose of the Youth Softball League is to promote fun and enjoyment while teaching the fundamentals of softball through both practice and game play. The league aims to inspire youth to embrace the values of health and character, while emphasizing the importance of teamwork and good sportsmanship. Additionally, we are committed to ensuring safe and well-supervised play, always placing the well-being of participants as our top priority.

- Age Requirements: A player's age is determined based on her age as of December 31 of the previous year.
  - Equation:  
 $2026 - \text{Birth Year} = \text{Player's Age}$
  - Example:  
 $2026 - 2014 = 12$   
(So the player is considered 12 years old for the current season.)
  
- Each team will have a maximum of 15 players.
  
- Equipment
  - Players must wear tennis shoes or molded rubber cleats.
    - Metal spikes are not allowed.
  - Protective helmets with face masks are required for:
    - All batters
    - Base runners
    - Players on deck
    - Player-coaches
  - Catchers must wear full protective gear, including:
    - Helmet with mask and throat protector
    - Chest protector
    - Shin guards

- 8U & 10U - An 11" softball will be used, meeting the following specifications:
  - Ball COR: .470 or lower
  - Ball compression: 375 lbs. or lower
- 12U - A 12" softball will be used, meeting the following specifications:
  - Ball COR: .470 or lower
  - Ball compression: 375 lbs. or lower
- All infielders are required to wear a protective face mask while on the field.

#### Playing Rules:

The Youth Softball League will follow NSA (National Softball Association) rules with the following league-specific modifications:

- Length of Game
  - a. Game Duration by Age Division:
    - i. 8U / 10U:
      - An official game will consist of 6 innings.
      - No new inning may begin after 70 minutes.
      - The inning in progress at the 70-minute mark will be completed unless the home team is ahead while at bat.
    - ii. 12U:
      - An official game will consist of 6 innings.
      - No new inning may begin after 90 minutes.
      - The inning in progress at the 90-minute mark will be completed unless the home team is ahead while at bat.
- Run Limit:
  - A maximum of 5 runs may be scored per inning.
  - Mercy Rule (12-Run Rule): The game will end if one team is ahead by 12 or more runs after: 4 complete innings, or 3½ innings if the home team is ahead.
- Regulation Game (Early Termination): A game will be considered official if stopped by the umpire or league supervisor due to weather, darkness, or other unforeseen circumstances, provided that:
  - At least 4 innings have been completed, or
  - The home team is leading after the visiting team has completed 4 at-bats.
- Dugout Policy:
 

Only the following individuals are permitted in the dugout during games:

  - Players listed on the official team roster
  - The team manager
  - Recognized coaches
  - One bat boy/girl
  - One scorekeeper
  - There will be a maximum of 5 dugout staff for 8U and a maximum of 4 dugout staff for 10U & 12U.

All non-active players must always remain seated in the dugout.  
Only one player is allowed in the on-deck circle at any given time.

Managers are responsible for strictly enforcing this rule to ensure player safety and maintain order during games.

- **Line-Up and Scorekeeping:** Each team coach must present a complete line-up card to the official scorekeeper at least 10 minutes before the start of the game.
  - The home team will serve as the official scorebook for the game.
- **Game Time and Forfeit Policy:** Game time is forfeit time.
  - 10U and 12U Teams: Teams may start and finish a game with as few as 8 players.
    - If a team anticipates not having enough players, they may move up a player from a younger division to bring their roster up to 10 players.
  - 8U Teams:
    - Teams may start and finish a game with as few as 6 players, as there is no lower division from which to draw players.
- **Conduct and Behavior:** Unsportsmanlike conduct, profane language, smoking, and use of tobacco products are strictly prohibited on the field and in the dugouts.
  - Managers are responsible for the behavior of their players at all times.
  - Any player exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct will be ejected immediately from the game and removed from the field.
- **Helmet Safety:** Any runner or batter who intentionally removes or throws her protective helmet may be called out after receiving a warning.
- **Batting and Defensive Participation:** All players present at the game must be included in the batting order.
  - Players arriving late must be added to the bottom of the batting order.
  - There is no penalty for playing short-handed.
  - Each team will always have 10 players on defense.
    - A maximum of 6 players may be positioned in the infield.
    - The 10th player will serve as an extra outfielder.
  - No defensive player may position herself closer to home plate than the pitcher before the ball is hit.
  - A player may sit out on defense for only one consecutive inning.
- **Pitching Rules by Division:**
  - 8U Division – Coach Pitch Format
    - No walks are allowed.
    - The coach will deliver up to 5 pitches. The batter may:
      - Get a hit
      - Strike out
      - On the final pitch, if the batter fouls it off, she may continue batting until she either strikes out or puts the ball in play.

- The defensive team must position one player no more than 3 feet to either side of or 3 feet behind the coach-pitcher.
      - One foot must remain inside the pitcher's circle.
    - Coaches must pitch from no closer than 35 feet behind home plate.
      - At least one foot must remain in contact with the pitching rubber during delivery.
  - 10U Division – Modified Player/Coach Pitch Format
    - Pitching Distance: Players pitch from 35 feet.
    - No walks are allowed.
    - Player Pitch: The pitcher will pitch until 4 balls are thrown.
      - If a batter is hit by a pitch and has made a reasonable attempt to avoid it, she will be awarded first base.
    - Coach Pitch (after 4 balls): A coach from the batting team will enter and pitch to the batter.
      - The coach assumes the existing strike count.
      - The coach will deliver up to 3 pitches. The batter may:
        - Get a hit
        - Strike out
        - On the final pitch, if the batter fouls it off, she may continue batting until she either strikes out or puts the ball in play.
      - Defensive Positioning During Coach Pitch: The defensive team must position one player no more than 3 feet to either side of or 3 feet behind the coach.
        - One foot must remain inside the pitcher's circle.
      - Coaches must pitch from no closer than 35 feet with one foot in contact with the pitching rubber.
      - Once the at-bat is completed, the coach leaves the field and the player-pitcher resumes pitching.
  - 12U Division – Player Pitch Format
    - Pitching Distance: Players will pitch from 40 feet.
    - Standard NSA rules apply for walks, hit batters, and at-bats.
- **Bunting Rules by Division:**
  - 8U Division:
    - Bunting is not allowed. Any attempt to bunt will result in a strike being called, regardless of whether contact is made.
  - 10U Division:
    - Bunting is allowed only when the batter is facing a player-pitched ball.
    - Bunting is not permitted when a coach is pitching.
  - 12U Division:
    - Bunting is allowed under standard rules at any time.
- **Base Stealing:**
  - 8U Division: No base stealing is allowed under any circumstances.
  - 10U Division:
    - Runners may steal only after the ball has crossed home plate.
    - Only one base may be stolen per pitch.

- Stealing home is not permitted. Runners must score from third base on a batted ball only.
- 12U Division:
  - A runner may not leave their base until the pitched ball has left the pitcher's hand.
- Speed-Up Rules: A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher or catcher at any time when they are on base.
  - This is mandatory for the catcher with two outs to help speed up the game.
  - The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out.
- Drone Policy: Drone use is strictly prohibited at the park during any games.
  - If a team or a parent affiliated with a team is found using a drone, the game will be stopped immediately and forfeited by the offending team.
- Protest Policy: An official written protest must be filed with the Statesville Recreation and Parks Department Office by:
  - 5:00 PM on the day following the contest, or by 12:00 noon on Monday following a Friday or Saturday game.
    - A \$50 protest fee must accompany the written protest.
    - If the protest is withdrawn or upheld, the fee will be refunded.

The City of Statesville Youth Softball Program reserves the right to change, modify, or add rules at any time if unforeseen issues arise, to ensure the continued improvement and integrity of the program.

