

2026 Cross Town Softball League Rules

Des Plaines / Niles / Norwood Park / ESAA / Park Ridge / Oriole Park / Norridge
Revised 4-29-2026

The official ASA Softball rules apply, except as provided herein. All managers and umpires are to have a set of rules with them at games.

DIVISION STRUCTURE

Grade in school as the current school year (2025 – 2026) constitutes the participants division:

Grades K- 2

Grades 3, 4

Grades 5, 6

Grades 7, 8, 9 (but not on High School team)

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

- 1.1. Each player shall be in full and clean uniform, including cap or visor and authorized shoes. NO metal spikes allowed.
- 1.2. Full catchers gear equipment is required.
- 1.3. All managers and coaches shall be in full uniform (official shirt). Not applicable when a substitute manager or coach are used in the absence of regular managers and coaches.
- 1.4. Intentional removal of helmet during play will cause the player to be declared out.
- 1.5. Players in the two younger divisions are NOT permitted to coach the bases. In the event a player in the two older divisions is coaching a base she must wear a helmet while on the field.
- 1.6. No jewelry is to be worn by players on the field. Managers and coaches will not be responsible for jewelry and other personal belongings.
- 1.7. Players should arrive at the playing field 30 minutes (1/2 hour) prior to the scheduled playing time or inform her manager of her intended absence or delay.
- 1.8. Only an adult (18 years or older) is permitted to manage at team.
- 1.9. Players may be registered to play for only one inter-league team.
- 1.10. Umpires for K-2 and 3/4 leagues must be at least 14 years old.
Umpires for the 5/6 and 7/8 leagues must be patched umpires.

2. GAME PRELIMINARIES

- 2.1. Fitness of playing fields shall be determined by the Park District and/or the League before the game and by the umpire once the game has started. If lightning is seen the game is suspended immediately and will be picked up at from that point at a later date.
- 2.2. If a team cancels a game non-weather related and the game is not made up, then it is a loss. If a game is rained out, coaches will be given time to reschedule before the league intervenes. If a date is not agreed upon after **48 hours**, the home team league director

decides when the game will be made up, which will be scheduled according to blackout dates and field availability.

- 2.3. All scheduled games must be completed, regardless of the effect on their outcome on the standings.
- 2.4. Ground rules are to be determined by the umpire and discussed with the managers prior to the beginning of each game.
- 2.5. In the event an umpire is not present, the managers will designate an umpire that is agreeable to both teams.
- 2.6. The first pitch of any inning constitutes the start of that inning.
- 2.7. If any team is unable to field a team of (6 players for 1st-2nd grade) or (7 players for 3rd -8th grade) within 15 minutes after the designated starting time that team shall forfeit the game.

3. LINEUP / SUBSTITUTION RULES

- 3.1. Round Robin batting order: all players in the lineup shall bat, regardless of their fielding assignments or lack thereof.
- 3.2. Defensive substitutions are NOT allowed in the middle of innings, unless necessitated by injury.
- 3.3. If a player arrives AFTER the first pitch of the first inning, but before the first pitch of the fourth inning she shall be inserted at the BOTTOM of the batting order. A violation of this rule will constitute a "batting out of order" ruling and an automatic out for that inning.
- 3.4. Players arriving after the first pitch of the fourth inning cannot play.
- 3.5. Coaches must ensure that every player sits out one inning before any player may sit out a second time, or meet another standard of playing fairness as determined by their local softball Board. The starting pitcher does not have to sit out as long as she continues to pitch in the game. Once she is done pitching she MUST take her turn to sit out.
- 3.6. Under extraordinary circumstances, which involve discipline or control of a player, Rule 3.5 may be waived. In the event such a situation occurs which causes a player to lose her turn at bat in the regular order, such player must then be removed from the game. When an exception occurs, the opposing manager and umpire must be informed.
- 3.7. If a player has to leave the game their spot in the order will be order be skipped with no penalty out.

4. CALL UP RULES

- 4.1. If a team cannot field 9 or 10 players (9 players for 5/6 or 7/8), for a scheduled game they may call up a player (s) from the next youngest division, using a list of substitutes provided by the league.
- 4.2. If a team is found to be using a player from another team within the same age group or older, that game will be forfeited and the coach will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- 4.3. Any player acting as a substitute must play the game in accordance with the rule 3.5.
- 4.4. Any given team is limited to a maximum of 3 call-up players for any game.

- 4.5. Call ups can only play the outfield.
- 4.6. Call-up players must bat last.
- 4.7. If no players are available to be used as substitutes the game must be rescheduled. To avoid forfeit a game must be canceled at least 24-hours before the scheduled time.

5. COMPLETION OF GAMES / RAINOUTS / DARKNESS

- 5.1. 10-run rule (for grades 5/6, 7/8 only): If a team is leading by 10 or more runs and the opposing team has been allowed 4 innings of offensive play, the game will be halted at that time with the leading team being declared the winner. If, after the visitor's half of the 4th inning the visiting team holds a 10-run lead, the home team will be permitted to bat in its half of the inning. If they fail to reduce the visiting team's lead to less than 10 runs, then the game will be halted and the leading team will be declared the winner.
- 5.2. If, in the judgment of an umpire, an inning may not be able to be completed as a result of darkness or inclement weather, that inning will not be initiated. **Umpire will notify both managers prior to beginning an inning when it is to be the last inning.**
- 5.3. If, after the initiation of an inning, the umpire judges it is too dark, or the weather is too inclement to continue, play will be halted even if the inning has not been completed.
- 5.4. In the event play is terminated in mid-inning, the following rules will apply:
 - 5.4.1. Score will revert to the last complete inning
 - 5.4.2. 4 innings constitutes a complete game (3 ½ innings is a complete game if the home team is ahead)
 - 5.4.3. If a game is not considered complete it will be suspended at the point play is halted. The game must be rescheduled and resumed at the point it was suspended.
 - 5.4.4. If a game is tied but considered complete when play is halted it will be called a complete game.
- 5.5. In no event shall an inning commence after dark.
- 5.6. All playoff games except the league championships have the same rules as the regular season. Championship games have no time limits.
- 5.7. If a playoff game is tied after 6 innings and time limit allows, the International Tie-Breaker will be used until a winner is determined. To start the inning, the last out from the previous inning will start on 2nd base.

6. PROTESTS

There will be no protests allowed. All umpire decisions are final.

7. CONDUCT

- 7.1. Managers, coaches and parents are strongly urged to remember that the game is for the kids.

- 7.2. Verbal or non-verbal harassment of players by opposing players, managers, coaches or spectators is strictly prohibited. Continued violation of this rule may result in the ejection of the offending parties and/or forfeiture of the game.
- 7.3. Verbal or non-verbal harassment of umpires by players, managers, coaches or spectators shall result in the ejection of the offending parties and/or forfeiture of the game.
- 7.4. No one, including spectators, shall be permitted to stand behind the backstop screen. The enforcement of this rule is the responsibility of the managers as well as the umpire.
- 7.5. No coaching by spectators is permitted.

8. RULES APPLYING TO ALL DIVISIONS

- 8.1. Team chants and cheering are allowed but they must only be positive, towards your own team or player and must end as soon as the ball is on the mound. Failure to follow the rules will result in a warning to the coach. A second violation will result in the coach being ejected and a third violation will result in the offending team given an out.
- 8.2. The batter may not throw the bat. The first occurrence will result in a warning by the umpire; the second, an automatic out; the third, an out and ejection from the game. For the second and third occurrence, the play is dead, and runners may not advance. This does not pertain to K – 2 leagues where the umpire will discuss with the player.
- 8.3. Base runners must make every effort to avoid collision with a defensive player. If, in the umpire's judgment, such effort was not made, the base runner will be called out. If, in the umpire's judgment, the collision was intentional, the base runner will be called out and ejected from the game.
- 8.4. Fielders not fielding a ball must make every effort to avoid collision with a base runner. In, the umpire's judgment such effort was not made, the base runner will be declared safe. If in the umpire's judgment, such collision was intentional, the fielder may be ejected from the game.
- 8.5. Courtesy runners are allowed for injured players. In such cases, the courtesy runner will be the player who made the last batted out prior to the request for a courtesy runner. In addition, the catcher can be replaced for a courtesy runner at any time and the pitcher for the next inning can be replaced with 2 outs.
- 8.6. Players in full catcher's gear, managers or coaches may warm up their pitchers between innings.
- 8.7. Appeals must be made verbally and before the next pitch, or any play or attempted play. An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or attempted play.
- 8.8. The pitching week shall be from Monday through Sunday.
- 8.9. One pitch shall constitute an inning pitched.
- 8.10. Any violation of pitching-rest rules or the number of innings pitched in any game or week shall result in forfeiture to the opposing team.
- 8.11. Managers or coaches cannot cross the baseline onto the field twice in the same defensive inning, or three times to the initial pitcher during the game, without removing the pitcher from the mound.
 - 8.11.1.1. Calling the pitcher to the sidelines constitutes a trip to the mound.

- 8.11.1.2. Calling a player to the sideline who then directly confers with the pitcher constitutes a trip to the mound.
- 8.12. Pitchers can begin their motion with just 1 foot on the pitching rubber. Stepping back with the non-pivot foot is ALLOWED. Pitchers that cannot throw from the mound will NOT be allowed to move forward. *No exceptions*. The pitcher is allowed to take one step toward the plate until the ball is released. The other foot needs to remain in contact with the ground either on the mound or by dragging.
- 8.13. Any player that shows that they are going to bunt must either bunt or pull back and take the pitch. Offering a bunt and then pulling back and taking a full swing will result in a dead ball and the batter being called out.
- 8.14. All infielders must wear a defensive mask.
- 8.15. When a safety base is used at first base, the runner must use the orange base and the defensive player must use the white base for any infield plays made at 1st base.
- 8.16. School nights are considered Sunday (545p or later) through Thursday.

9. GRADES K, 1, 2

- 9.1. No new inning may begin 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch.
- 9.2. Whenever a game is scheduled on a school night there is a drop dead time of 8pm.
- 9.3. There shall be 50 feet between the bases.
- 9.4. An 11" safety ball will be used.
- 9.5. A maximum of two on-field defensive coaches may be used. Their function is to advise, coach or instruct the fielding team upon completion of a specific play. One offensive coach must be positioned behind the catcher and gather and return balls to the pitcher.
- 9.6. An inning will consist of three outs, bat order, or 5-run limit, whichever comes first. When one team has fewer players present the larger number will be the most either team may bat in one inning.
- 9.7. Teams will use 10 players in the field including short center. The short center fielder may play in the outfield OR at least 10 feet behind second base. The short center can not play on or in front of the base. Outfielders must play in the outfield, which is defined as **at least** 10 feet past the baseline. At the time the ball crosses the plate any player/position may make a play.
- 9.8. No extra base allowed on an overthrow.
- 9.9. The play is dead when the ball is in possession of an infielder in the infield.
- 9.10. Live coach pitching begins with first game. Hitters are allowed 7 attempts at the ball, either off the coach's pitch or off the tee; however, starting **June 1**, no tee will be used.
- 9.11. Teams will be given the option of letting their own girls pitch a max of 3 innings to their own team. If a team elects to do this, the girl must pitch from 30 ft and is allowed a max of 7 pitches per batter. When a girl pitches, there will be 2 players on the field at the pitchers position: 1 is the girl who is actually pitching and the other will be an opposing team's player. (This will speed up the game by not having the pitcher run on and off the field after every batter.)

10. GRADES 3, 4

- 10.1. No new inning may begin 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch. If back to back games are scheduled, then there will be a drop dead time limit of 1 hour and 55 minutes.
- 10.2. Whenever a game is scheduled on a school night, there is a drop dead time of 8pm.
- 10.3. There shall be 60 feet between the bases.
- 10.4. The distance from the rubber to the plate shall be 35 feet.
- 10.5. An 11" yellow ball shall be used.
- 10.6. Teams will use 10 players in the field including short center. The short center fielder may play in the outfield OR at least 10 feet behind second base. The short center can not play on or in front of the base. Outfielders must play in the outfield, which is defined as **at least** 10 feet past the baseline. At the time the ball crosses the plate any player/position may make a play.
- 10.7. No stealing is allowed.
- 10.8. Lead-offs are allowed only AFTER the pitch has crossed home plate. Runners leaving early may be declared out. The catcher is permitted to play on a runner leading off but runners may not advance.
- 10.9. Bunting is allowed.
- 10.10. No dropped third strike.
- 10.11. No infield fly rule.
- 10.12. The play will be called dead once the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the infield but the pitcher must not be beyond the baselines. The umpire will determine when control is gained and where the base-runners are and if they can advance or go back to the base.
- 10.13. **Pitchers can begin their motion with just 1 foot on the pitching rubber. Stepping back with the non-pivot foot is ALLOWED.** Pitchers that cannot throw from the mound will NOT be allowed to move forward. **No exceptions.** The pitcher is allowed to take one step toward the plate until the ball is released. **The other foot needs to remain in contact with the ground either on the mound or by dragging.**
- 10.14. Crosstown league pitchers shall pitch no more than 3 innings per game. ~~Any combination of travel pitchers may pitch no more than 2 innings total in a game. Travel position players who are not pitching in a travel league will have the same inning limitations as a house league pitcher. A pitcher may be removed and re-enter the game multiple times but is not permitted to re-enter in the same inning which she was removed.~~ One pitch counts as an inning. No pitcher may pitch more than 12 innings in one pitching week.
 - ~~10.14.1. A travel pitcher is defined as a player actively pitching for a travel team.~~
- 10.15. No walks will be permitted. If ball four is called the batter will not be awarded first base. The strike count will remain the same. The batter's coach will have a max of 3 pitches until the ball is put into play or the batter strikes out. *If a batter fouls off the 3rd pitch or any pitch thereafter, she will continue her at-bat until she puts the ball into play, swings and misses or*

takes a pitch. This rule is designed to prevent the tedium of the game that occurs when pitchers walk many consecutive batters.

- 10.16. Batters hit by a pitched ball (from a player, not a coach) will be awarded first base under the following guidelines:
 - 10.16.1. The batter/ball contact must be as a result of a direct hit or after one bounce. More than one bounce and the batter will not be awarded the base
 - 10.16.2. The batter must show that they made a legitimate effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball. If the umpire determines they have, the player will be awarded the base.
 - 10.16.3. If a batter is hit by a rolling ball she will not be awarded a base.
- 10.17. Teams will bat the entire roster of players. The side will be retired when 5 runs have been scored, or three outs have been made, regardless of the number of batters on either team. The 5-run rule does NOT apply for either team during the last inning (either the 6th inning or the mutually agreed-upon last inning if prior to the 6th). Note: If warranted by weather or darkness, or time limits, the managers and the umpire should consult and designate an inning as the last inning before that inning begins.
- 10.18. Any pitcher that hits 2 batters that are awarded a base, in one inning shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning. If the same pitcher hits 3 batters during the course of the game and those batters are awarded a base, shall be removed from the pitching position for the duration of the game.
- 10.19. On infield plays when a throw is made to first base, the batter may not advance to second. In addition, runners may not advance on an overthrow to any base.
- 10.20. Each inning the team at bat will start with a runner on 2nd base. For the first inning it is the last girl in the batting order. For all other innings it is the last out of the previous inning.

11. GRADES 5, 6

- 11.1. No new inning may begin 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch on school nights. If a game is scheduled on a weekend with no game after, the game will be played until completion or until slaughter rule comes into effect. If back to back games are scheduled, then there will be a drop dead time limit of 1 hour and 55 minutes.
- 11.2. Whenever a game is schedule on a school night, there is a drop dead time of 8pm.
- 11.3. There shall be 60 feet between the bases; the distance from the rubber to the plate shall be 40 feet.
- 11.4. A 12" ball shall be used. The ball shall be yellow, with a COR of .44 and a maximum compression of 375.
- 11.5. The game will be 6 innings.
- 11.6. Teams will use 9 players on defense. At the time the ball crosses the plate any player/position may make a play.
- 11.7. **Stealing of 2nd and 3rd base is permitted.** The runner may not leave the base until the ball has crossed the plate on any given pitch. Runners leaving early will be declared out. Runners stealing **cannot** advance another base on the same play, even if the catcher overthrows the base.

- 11.8. A runner may attempt to take **only one** extra base on a fielding overthrow to a base following a batted ball. A runner trying to advance to third base on a batted ball may attempt to score on a fielding overthrow to third base.
- 11.9. Bunting is allowed.
- 11.10. The infield fly rule is not in effect.
- 11.11. No dropped third strike.
- 11.12. Crosstown league pitchers shall pitch no more than 3 innings per game. Any combination of travel ~~pitchers~~ **players** may pitch no more than 2 innings total in a game. ~~Travel position players who are not pitching in a travel league will have the same inning limitations as a house league pitcher. A pitcher may be removed and re-enter the game multiple times but is not permitted to re-enter in the same inning which she was removed.~~ One pitch counts as an inning. No pitcher may pitch more than 12 innings in one pitching week.
 - 11.12.1. **A travel pitcher is defined as a player actively pitching for a travel team.**
- 11.13. Pitchers can begin their motion with just 1 foot on the pitching rubber. Stepping back with the non-pivot foot is ALLOWED. Pitchers that cannot throw from the mound will NOT be allowed to move forward. *No exceptions.* The pitcher is allowed to take one step toward the plate until the ball is released. The other foot needs to remain in contact with the ground either on the mound or by dragging.
- 11.14. Intentional walks are not allowed.
- 11.15. Any pitcher that hits 2 batters that are awarded a base, in one inning shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning. If the same pitcher hits 3 batters during the course of the game and those batters are awarded a base, shall be removed from the pitching position for the duration of the game.
- 11.16. Teams will bat the entire roster of players. The side will be retired when 5 runs have been scored, or three outs have been made, regardless of the number of batters on either team. The 5-run rule does NOT apply for either team during the last inning (either the 6th inning or the mutually agreed-upon last inning if prior to the 6th). Note: If warranted by weather or darkness, or time limits, the managers and the umpire should consult and designate an inning as the last inning before that inning begins.
- 11.17. Slaughter rule is in effect. If a team is leading by 10 or more runs and the opposing team has been allowed 4 innings of offensive play, the game will be halted at that time with the leading team being declared the winner. If, after the visitor's half of the 4th inning, the visiting team holds a 10-run lead the home team will be permitted to bat in its half of the inning. If they fail to reduce the visiting team's lead to less than 10 runs, then the game will be halted and the leading team will be declared the winner.
- 11.18. Batters hit by a pitched ball will be awarded first base under the following guidelines:
 - 11.18.1. The batter/ball contact must be as a result of a direct hit or after one bounce. More than one bounce and the batter will not be awarded the base
 - 11.18.2. The batter must show that they made a legitimate effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball. If the umpire determines they have, the player will be awarded the base.
 - 11.18.3. If a batter is hit by a rolling ball she will not be awarded a base.

12. GRADES 7, 8

- 12.1. No new inning may begin 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch on weeknights unless playing on a field with lights. If a game is scheduled on a weekend with no game after, the game will be played until completion or until slaughter rule comes into effect. If back to back games are scheduled then there will be a drop dead time limit of 1 hour and 55 minutes.
- 12.2. There shall be 60 feet between the bases; the distance from the rubber to the plate shall be 43 feet.
- 12.3. A 12" ball shall be used. The ball shall be yellow, with a COR of .44 and a maximum compression of 375.
- 12.4. The game will be 6 innings.
- 12.5. Teams will use 9 players on defense.
- 12.6. Stealing any base is permitted; runners may not leave the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand on any given pitch. Runners leaving early will be declared out.
- 12.7. Bunting is allowed.
- 12.8. Infield fly rule is in effect. The infield fly rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third or home. In these situations, if a fair fly ball is hit that, in the umpire's judgment, is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out regardless whether the ball is actually caught in flight.
- 12.9. Dropped third strike is in effect. Definition: On an uncaught third strike with no runner on first (or with two outs regardless of whether there is a runner on first) the batter immediately becomes a runner. The strike is called, but the umpire does not call the batter out. The umpire may also signal there is "no catch" of the pitch. The batter may then attempt to reach first base and must be tagged or thrown out. If, at the time of the strike three pitch, first base is occupied with fewer than two outs, the batter is automatically out, and cannot become a runner.
- 12.10. Pitchers can begin their motion with just 1 foot on the pitching rubber. Stepping back with the non-pivot foot is ALLOWED. Pitchers that cannot throw from the mound will NOT be allowed to move forward. *No exceptions*. The pitcher is allowed to take one step toward the plate until the ball is released. The other foot needs to remain in contact with the ground either on the mound or by dragging.
- 12.11. Crosstown league pitchers shall pitch no more than 4 innings per game. Any combination of travel pitchers may pitch no more than 2 innings total in a game. Travel position players who are not pitching in a travel league will have the same inning limitations as a house league pitcher. A pitcher may be removed and re-enter the game multiple times but is not permitted to re-enter in the same inning which she was removed. One pitch counts as an inning. No pitcher may pitch more than 12 innings in one pitching week.
 - 12.11.1. **A travel pitcher is defined as a player actively pitching for a travel team.**
- 12.12. Teams will bat the entire roster of players. The side will be retired when 5 runs have scored or 3 outs are made, regardless of the number of batters on either team. The 5-run rule does NOT apply for either team during the last inning (either the 6th inning or the mutually agree-upon last inning if prior to the 6th). Note: If warranted by weather or darkness, or time limits, the managers and the umpire should consult and designate an inning as the last inning before that inning begins. If the first half of the final inning takes too long to complete, the score reverts to the last completed inning.

- 12.13 Slaughter rule is in effect. If a team is leading by 10 or more runs and the opposing team has been allowed 4 innings of offensive play, the game will be halted at that time with the leading team being declared the winner. If, after the visitor's half of the 4th inning, the visiting team holds a 10-run lead the home team will be permitted to bat in its half of the inning. If they fail to reduce the visiting team's lead to less than 10 runs, then the game will be halted and the leading team will be declared the winner.
- 12.14 Ties will be broken using the international tiebreaker rule. Under this rule in extra innings the offensive team begins its turn at bat with a runner at second base. That runner is the player that was the last batter to make an out in the previous inning. This will continue each inning until the game is decided.
- 12.16 Any pitcher who hits 2 batters in one inning shall be removed from the pitching position for the duration of that inning. She may return to pitch later in the game.
- 12.17 If any pitcher hits 3 batters in a game she is removed from the pitching position for the **duration** of the game.
- 12.18 Batters hit by a pitched ball will be awarded first base under the following guidelines:
- 12.18.1 The batter/ball contact must be as a result of a direct hit or after one bounce. More than one bounce and the batter will not be awarded the base
 - 12.18.2 The batter must show that they made a legitimate effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball. If the umpire determines they have, the player will be awarded the base.
 - 12.18.3 If a batter is hit by a rolling ball she will not be awarded a base.